

WALSINGHAM;

OR,

THE PUPIL OF NATURE.

A DOMESTIC STORY.

By

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THE WIDOW—VANCENZA, &c. &c. &c.

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CHAP. XXIII.

We had scarcely advanced ten paces, when a shriek from Lady Aubrey's dressing-room, the windows of which were open, arrested our footsteps. Miss Hanbury flew towards the house, we followed. On entering the apartment from which the alarm proceeded, we beheld Lady Aubrey pale, and unable to utter a syllable, holding Sir Sidney's arm, whose hand grasped a pistol, and whose whole frame was convulsed, with agitation. I rushed forward, and

wrenched the instrument of death from his trembling hand ; he fell upon my shoulder, and seemed to lose all sensation. His lips and cheeks were white, and cold as marble ; Isabella shrieked. “ He will die ! ” exclaimed she ; “ O God ! —he is dying ! ”

Sir Sidney revived—“ Would to Heaven I were so happy ! ” said he, feebly ; “ for such complicated miseries are not to be supported ! —To adore one object—to deceive another—It were better that I should expire.” Isabella could not suppress her tears ; they flowed spontaneously, notwithstanding all her efforts to repel them. Her bosom was not wholly devoid of pity ; but the sentiment of nature overpowered the efforts of humanity. My pangs were infinite ! while the torturing consciousness of what I suffered taught me to feel commiseration, even for my rival. Sir Sidney observed the agonies of my soul ;

soul ; they were delineated in every feature of my distorted visage ; they presented an unsophisticated epitome of the mind's chaos : my brain shudders at the recollection of what I then suffered.

Sir Sidney entreated me to leave him. " If you have one atom of mercy in your bosom, I conjure you to be gone," said he. The tone of his voice smote my heart ; it was wild, yet sad ; and though tender, energetic. " Let us leave him with Walsingham," said my aunt. She quitted the room, followed by Colonel Aubrey and Isabella.

As soon as they were gone, Sir Sidney looked mournfully at the pistol which lay on the carpet—" Oh, Walsingham!" exclaimed he, " what a devoted wretch am I ! What a despicable, monstrous hypocrite ! Could you behold my palpitating heart ; could you but read the dark and cureless sorrows

of my destiny——” His articulation was suspended by the conflicts of his mind during several moments, when he, suddenly pressing his hand to his forehead, continued, “ My brain is burning with mental agony!—Oh, Nature! hast thou no pity for thy child, thy victim?”—I knew not what to say, or how to meliorate his acute sufferings: I entreated him to tranquillize his mind, and to obey the dictates of reason. He smiled, and shook his head with a melancholy expression. “ You counsel wisely,” said he; “ but can you exemplify the doctrines you inculcate? Can you behold the object of your fondest hopes wrested from you, and say, with truth, that reason will instruct you to be patient?”—I felt conviction throb within my bosom;—I was silent.

“ Walsingham,” continued Sir Sidney, “ either you must depart, or *I* must perish: I could unfold a scene of horrors

horrors so complicated, so terrible, that my soul shudders at the idea of their continuance!—Isabella——”

“ What of her?” interrupted I, eagerly.

“ Isabella loves you, Walsingham!” answered Sir Sidney, with a faltering voice; “ but she never must be your’s: I cannot live to see it. Promise me that you will not think of her——”

“ You are frantic,” said I.

“ Almost, indeed!” replied my cousin; “ but your promise——”

“ I cannot pledge my word to any injunction so perfectly ridiculous,” answered I. “ Indeed, even were our affections at our own disposal, the unreasonable demand you make would prevent the possibility of a compliance, mean and derogatory to the principles of my nature. The most unpardonable despot is he who would shackle the mind:—I cannot, I *will not* relinquish Isabella.”

"That is your determination?" cried Sir Sidney, hastily.

"Irrevocably," answered I.

"Then, Walsingham, farewell for ever!" exclaimed my cousin, darting out of the apartment, and leaving me perplexed in the extreme.

I descended to the park, where I met Mr. Hanbury: I told him what had passed, and he advised me to return to college. "It is merely a boyish passion," said he; "and, most probably, will not be lasting. Lady Aubrey will never consent to an alliance between Sir Sidney and my sister, and Isabella's pride will prove an insuperable bar to a clandestine union." His words bewildered my imagination. I had concluded from his former conversation, that Mr. Hanbury was assured of Lady Aubrey's consent, and that the marriage was considered as an affair of certainty. After a short pause I resumed

fumed the discourse. " If you sanction the addresses of Sir Sidney, Lady Aubrey will not be averse to their success," said I. " Where can the heir of Glenowen find so honourable an alliance? so amiable, so fascinating a wife as Isabella? She will embellish the fortune which she will command; she will be the pride, the ornament, the blessing of Sir Sidney's family."

" Never, with my consent," interrupted Mr. Hanbury.—I started; he proceeded. " From her infancy I have considered her as your promised wife; I have fashioned your minds to blend in the sweet unison of unambitious love; I have anticipated the hour when your virtues would embellish the calm vale of life, enliven its most dreary scenes, and smooth every path towards immortality. The wealth, the splendour which Sir Sidney can bestow, will not compensate for the loss of mental pleasures,

nursed in the silent haunts of solitude and virtue."

I listened with rapture; my heart beat high, and my blood quickened in circulation with every word he uttered. A pause again ensued, which lasted till we reached the library.

Lady Aubrey informed us that Sir Sidney was somewhat more composed, but that he chose, during the remainder of the day, to continue in his chamber.

The conflicts, which the various sensations of the morning had produced in my mind, almost benumbed its recollection. I had never avowed a passion for Isabella; I had not, till Sir Sidney's return, even betrayed a wish beyond that of the purest friendship. The generous avowal of approbation from the lips of my tutor, encouraged me to hope; and hope, like the dew of Heaven, while it cherishes the buds of affection, calls forth all that can sweeten life,

life, or adorn humanity. Cold must that heart have been which Isabella could not interest!—I leave you, Rosanna, to judge what I experienced, impressed with the most enthusiastic fondness, formed in our days of childhood, and consecrated by the sympathies of reason.

Still Isabella seemed anxious for the fate of Sir Sidney. She remained at the manor-house till late in the evening, and frequently sent inquiries to his chamber, expressed in terms of unusual solicitude. At midnight we returned to the parsonage: the weather was clear; and we strolled slowly along the park. Mr. Hanbury questioned his sister respecting the conduct of Sir Sidney, and in the most unequivocal language demanded her confidence. She assured him that no professions of love for her had ever escaped his lips.

I listened with an anxious heart, and was almost inclined to fashion my credulity by the tenor of my wishes. There was an air of sincerity in Isabella's declaration, which was sufficient to silence the fears of scepticism. She had, from her infancy, been taught to revere the dignity of truth; and I had not courage to become an apostate before the oracle of my faith—the object of my idolatry!

CHAP. XXIV.

ON the following morning, Colonel Aubrey came early to the parsonage: Mr. Hanbury and Isabella were absent, and, as he found me alone, our discourse turned on the conduct of my aunt, and Sir Sidney's rash attempt on his own life.

Colonel

Colonel Aubrey's manner indicated a mind labouring to unfold some hidden secret: he walked about with an evident uneasiness, which, at times, broke forth in half-suppressed ejaculations, and at others absorbed him in profound silence. At length, after many unsuccessful attempts to quit the room, he took hold of my arm, and, leading me towards the garden, seriously addressed me:—"Mr. Ainsforth," said he, "there certainly is some dreadful cause for my nephew's inquietude, beyond his passion for Isabella Hanbury. I heard a conversation this morning in Lady Aubrey's dressing-room, which is adjoining to the chamber where I slept, and there does not remain a doubt in my mind of its importance. I will endeavour to repeat what passed, as nearly as I can be correct; for my nephew's voice was often low and inarticulate, as though he laboured under extreme agitation."

"For Heaven's sake be brief," said I.

"Lady Aubrey," continued he, "reproved her son for his rash and criminal conduct. 'Reflect for a moment,' said she, 'and recover your fortitude. Think what degradation would follow the step which you meditate: what ruin to yourself, what disgrace to your family.'

'Am I then to be the victim of ambition?' replied Sir Sidney; 'are the despicable distinctions of fortune to shackle all my hopes, darken all my prospects, and bend me to an untimely grave? Are all the energies of the soul to be subdued by the triumphs of pride and duplicity?—The cheek may wear the smile of contentment, even when the heart is wrung with remorse; the eye put on the vivacity of joy, and glisten through the tears of agonizing compunction; but nature will speak in frequent whispers to the feeling mind,

and

and there is no sound that can overpower the voice of conscience.'

' Reflect on the criminality of self-annihilation !' said Lady Aubrey.

' Is it not virtue to perish,' said Sir Sidney, ' when it is infamy to live ? The day of retribution must come ; and the longer I exist, the more will my guilt accumulate.'

' But a passion so absurd, so degrading !' cried Lady Aubrey.

' Can we command the affections of the heart ?' replied Sir Sidney. ' Can we resist the instinctive impulse which is inherent to our natures ?'

' Yet I conjure you to conquer this base infatuation. The hour of repentance will arrive when your miseries will be irremediable,' said Lady Aubrey.

' Then let it come !' interrupted Sir Sidney, raising his voice with impetuosity ; ' if I have courage to meet death, I have equal resolution to bear the

the frowns of fortune. O God! thou knowest, that, with the being I am destined to idolize, I could live contentedly on the summit of a mountain.'

' Romantic folly!' exclaimed Lady Aubrey: ' this is the language of a maniac!'

' Then truth is frenzy,' replied Sir Sidney. ' If the agonizing conflicts of a breaking heart cannot awaken pity in your bosom, how shall I address you? In what language shall I urge you to be just? How obtain your sanction to throw off the veil of infamy beneath which my cheek glows with shame and self-reproach? The wants of Colonel Aubrey, the gloom of poverty which overshadows the laurels he has won, and his inestimable virtues, so long neglected, combine to awaken pangs which nothing can alleviate. Will you doom an only child to the slow and certain agonies of despair?'

' I cannot

‘ I cannot yield you up to the sneers and insults of the world; I cannot behold you wedded to one so much beneath you,’ replied the inexorable mother.

‘ Then I will follow Colonel Aubrey’s fortune,’ cried Sir Sidney. ‘ I will accompany him to Gibraltar.’ He hesitated, and, receiving no reply, continued, ‘ you do not answer me. Unkind and cruel parent! Think that you behold me the lifeless victim of ambition! Feel the touch of nature; let it vibrate on your heart; let it penetrate those fibres, which are become almost insensible to the pleadings of humanity. Do not, by sacrificing me, heap on your own soul the punishment of eternal anguish.’

“ Lady Aubrey was silent, but I could distinctly hear her weep and sob incessantly.

“ Sir Sidney resumed his intreaties: ‘ I will this day unburden my full heart
to

to Isabella :— I will tell her all I feel, all I anticipate ; for I cannot, I will not live to see her the wife of Walsingham.'

' They were educated together : their situations in life are similar : the union would be sanctioned by equality,' replied Lady Aubrey. ' Your cousin is a proper husband for the sister of Mr. Hanbury.'

' Perish all distinctions, but those, which originate in mental superiority !' exclaimed my nephew. ' What am I, amidst the profusion of wealth which chance has heaped around me ? A monster of dissimulation ! a wretch, weighed down with guilt ! a vile, degraded, infamous, and sordid hypocrite ! But before I sleep again, this misery shall terminate. I will destroy the spell which threatens to benumb the warmest affections of my heart. I will separate Isabella

bella and Walsingham, or I will cease to breathe.'

"Lady Aubrey again remonstrated: Sir Sidney persevered in his determination, till she left him in a paroxysm of rage."

"I heard him traversing his apartment during more than half an hour, talking wildly to himself, and cursing his unhappy fortune with all the vehemence of despair; while your name and that of Miss Hanbury were several times uttered with an agonized tone, which convinced me that you were the cause of his distraction."

Colonel Aubrey having concluded his account of the morning's interview, requested to hear my opinion. I had not power to speak. "It is evident," cried he, "that Isabella's want of rank and fortune excludes her from Lady Aubrey's favour. The boy is animated with a passion which can only be subdued by time.

time and reason : leave him to the united powers of both ; you can rely on Isabella's virtue ; and you know the inexorable heart which will never consent to their union. I shall set out for Bath in a few days ; have you resolution to be the companion of my journey ?”

“ This night you shall have my answer,” said I. “ The event is too important to admit of a decision hasty or imprudent. If Isabella loves Sir Sidney, my conduct shall be firm, my resolution invincible.”—We were interrupted by Mr. Hanbury ; I took Colonel Aubrey aside ; conjured him not to divulge what had passed, and promised to talk farther with him on the business at the close of evening. Oh, Rosanna ! what were my sorrows ! I considered myself as a being, devoted to anguish. Poor, and dependent ; could I meditate a selfish wish, when splendour, happiness, and rank awaited on Isabella ?

The

The kind and manly conduct of Colonel Aubrey inspired me with a sort of desperate resolution, which is often the substitute for genuine fortitude. I was hampered in the toil, and had no hope of escaping, but by an effort, which would either restore my peace of mind, or annihilate me. I demanded of my heart whether its gratification, or Isabella's happiness, was its primary object. I trembled while I asked the important question;—I trembled, not for myself, but for the idol of my affections. Reason is sometimes subservient to our caprices; but the noblest passions of the human breast triumph in union with virtue, and shrink with equal disgust from the meanness of deception, and the baseness of dishonour.

I remained more than an hour in the arbour which had been endeared by the innocent delights of childhood, and consecrated by the affections of nature.

All

All that had passed, served only to contrast the sombre aspect of present events. I found my perplexities almost insupportable : I reproached myself for that tacit acquiescence, which yielded up my hopes without even an effort to accomplish them. Man, without energy, is like the vessel which, wanting a pilot's aid, is borne along a sea of sorrows, helpless and despairing ! Every blast annoys him ; every coming wave threatens his destruction, till he is ingulphed, and lost for ever ! Such were my reflections ; they roused me from the stupor of affliction ; they awakened me to know myself ; to see the peril of my situation, and to arm my soul for every approaching trial.

CHAP. XXV.

I HASTENED without delay to the manor-house, where I found Sir Sidney, in the library, writing, and alone. I felt that the moment when the crisis of my fate approached, was not to be lost in trifling ceremonies, or employed in useless conversation. My cousin's peace of mind was equally interested with my own. Isabella's hopes, her felicity, her affections, were at stake, and I resolved on being explicit. Sir Sidney rose as I approached him: "Walsingham," said he, with a mixture of reproof and sorrow, "why do you persecute me? am I not sufficiently unhappy?"

"I came hither," answered I, "with the hope of finding Isabella: business of the utmost importance requires an immediate and final interview;—but it must

must be private : what I have to communicate will be decisive."

" A private interview with Isabella ! and on business of importance !" cried Sir Sidney, " what can it mean ? Oh, Walsingham ! what is it you meditate ? Tell me, I conjure you ;—every sentiment of my heart is interested in the question. Do you mean to marry Isabella ?"

I made no reply : he grasped my hand and held it firmly. " Answer me quickly," continued he, " for the period is now arrived when your language *must* be unequivocal. I insist—I demand to know your intentions."

" By what authority ?"

" By all the claims of honour and sincerity !" continued Sir Sidney. " If you are determined to make Isabella your wife, there is but one step for me to take." He paused :—I smiled at the implied menace :—my breast panted

with rage and indignation :—he continued. “ Your silence is an acknowledgment of your purpose. Then hear me, Walsingham. Since the possession of Isabella can alone constitute your happiness, I will forbear to persecute you. I will be the victim ; but on one condition only.”

“ Name it,” said I briefly.

“ That you will permit me to question, to examine her heart ; to hear my conviction from her own lips, and to place the matter beyond the very shadow of uncertainty, by demanding a candid avowal of her sentiments. If Isabella loves you, no sound of reproach shall ever disturb your tranquillity ;—an eternal silence shall be your safeguard, and my penance.”

A thousand painful ideas rushed across my brain : the heroic bosom, which could relinquish its fondest wishes, its dearest hopes, to promote my felicity, shamed

shamed me into generosity. I could not bear to be vanquished by superior fortitude ; and, in the vaunting pride of the moment, I promised to resign Isabella for ever.

Sir Sidney fell upon my neck and wept. Every vein within my heart was wrung to torture. The library door was open, and I observed Miss Hanbury advancing through the park. The conflict was terrible. I longed to take a last farewell ; to explain my motives, and to hear one kind, one gentle adieu before we separated eternally. I broke abruptly from Sir Sidney, and quitted the room. Colonel Aubrey joined Isabella, and they turned towards the wood. All the torments of despair and jealousy conspired in a terrific phalanx to overturn my reason. I resolved to quit Glenowen, to seek, in some far distant country, an asylum, where I might end my days of sorrow, unknown, and consequently

sequently unlamented. But the means of subsistence till I could reach the spot of destination—how were they to be acquired? A project occurred, uncertain as it was desperate—I hesitated a moment, and then flew to find Lady Aubrey.

She was in her chamber; the magnitude of my distress, the event which hurried me on to madness, made me forgetful of the decorum which at any other period I should not have violated—I knocked hastily at the door of her apartment, she bade me enter: I started back almost petrified with surprize, for the first object that met my eye was the ivory cabinet which, with all my remaining hopes, I had entrusted to the care of Mr. Hanbury.

The conversation which had passed between us at the parsonage was fully elucidated: I now beheld the object which he had wished me to resign, and

which he considered it dishonourable to retain. I had consented to his restoring it; I had only to blame myself for that impetuosity which shrunk from a cool and temperate explanation. My looks betrayed the perturbation of my mind; —they terrified Lady Aubrey—she rose abruptly from her seat, and would have passed towards the door: I caught her arm and held her—“ You go not, madam,” said I sternly, “ you move not, while I have strength to hold you: the hour is come when we must lay aside the trivial forms of ceremony, and speak without reserve.”

She trembled and grew pale.

There are situations where we can pity the frailty which prompted even the most atrocious injury—but it must be when the heart is softened, not when distress and persecution have steeled it to resistance; we then behold our enemy without compassion; and if the senti-

ment of revenge be subdued by the efforts of reason, the pride of scorn only acquires new vigour by the conquest.

Lady Aubrey's timidity was the result of guilt: her eyes involuntarily turned, with a ghastly expression, towards the cabinet. Every glance augmented my indignation; she struggled to get from me—she shrieked—I commanded her to be silent—“ If you wish to avoid eternal disgrace,” said I, “ you will restrain your rage, and, without compulsion, discover the contents of that repository: my situation is desperate, and I will be obeyed.”

Lady Aubrey shook in every joint; the cold drops stood, like witnessess of her guilt, on her livid forehead; her hesitation irritated my already desperate mind, and I led her, by force, towards the cabinet.

Rosanna! what a tremendous moment did I pass!—On the ivory lid lay

Sir Sidney's pistol—it had been removed from his chamber by Lady Aubrey, the preceding evening.

Still she resisted, and still I grasped her arm. "What do you demand?" cried she; "Is it my life?"

"Heaven forbid," said I, "that the injuries and insults which you have heaped upon me, should urge my hand to attempt a crime so horrible! I demand the key of this cabinet, this precious secret repository, which, if I mistake not, contains the fiat of my destiny. I snatched it from the flames; fate placed it in my possession; the nice sense of honour, which ever actuates the mind of my tutor, induced him to restore it; but now the hour of retribution is come; and justice will prevail, in defiance of all your machinations."

She drew a key from her pocket, and with a trembling hand presented it to me: I turned to open the folding doors

in

in the front of the cabinet, when she seized the pistol, and presenting it to my breast, bade me desist. At this moment Mrs. Blagden entered the room; her shrieks arrested my hand, just as I discovered that the key which I had received from Lady Aubrey was a false one, merely given to divert my attention, and to favour her infernal purpose. Mrs. Blagden, who knew by the situation in which she found me, the motive which led me thither, was too prudent to alarm the family; and I was so completely exhausted by agitation, that I could then make no farther trial respecting the mystery of the cabinet. I however resolved to use every precaution against future villainy. Lady Aubrey's terrors convinced me that something of importance was concealed from the eye of justice; therefore, after leading her and Mrs. Blagden out of the room, I

fastened the door, and went immediately in search of Mr. Hanbury.

I darted forward, unconscious whither I was going. I hurried through the woods; I climbed the steep and rugged mountain, wild and distracted! Evening closed, and the deepening shades of twilight gathered round me. Twice I advanced to the margin of a jutting eminence, resolved to dash my wretched form amidst the airy abyss, and to end my agonies with my weary existence; but the cowardice which is imputed to suicide—the disgrace which follows the memory of the victim whose sorrows become predominant over his reasoning faculties, restrained me: I reflected; I resolved to live—to be a sad and lingering example of the persecutions of fortune, the injustice of—Hold! what am I writing? Heaven will pardon the idea; it was unpremeditated; and you, amiable

amiable Rosanna, will pity the despair which gave it a momentary sanction.

CHAP. XXVI.

I DETERMINED that night to discover the mystery of the cabinet, to open it in the presence of the whole family, and to reveal my reasons for so doing previous to the experiment; if I failed in my project, I also resolved to quit Glenowen for ever; it was therefore necessary that I should return to the parsonage, and prepare every thing for my journey.

As soon as day shut in, I descended the rough slope, and hastened towards the asylum of my youth, the abode of virtue, the scene of past delight, the spot in which I should entomb every

hope of earthly happiness. The only road lay through the park: my heart was bursting with agony—my brain scorched with the fever of despair—when I passed the manor-house.—How shall I describe what followed?

The evening was sultry; the library windows facing the park were open to the ground, and several lights were burning in different parts of the room. Arrested by an undescribable impulse, I stopped: on a sofa near the window sat Isabella and Sir Sidney: he was talking earnestly to her; she was bathed in tears: his cheek reclined upon her bosom—she kissed his forehead! I saw no more—I fled.

The gloom on every side seemed to deepen with new horrors! I rushed forward, as if borne by supernatural power; I passed through the church-yard—the grave of my mother received my last agonized tear; I threw myself on

on my knees beside the simple stone that recorded her virtues: how still, how solemn seemed every thing around me! The night-breeze stole unheard over the bleak and lofty mountain; the thin mist rapidly floated along the valley. I cast a wistful look towards Glenowen; the lights were visible in the library—I groaned—I shuddered! The recollection of my project vanished; a deeper, a more torturing wound was inflicted than any that adversity could bestow.—What object remained to charm my senses?—What pleasure could fortune yield amidst the agonies of despair?—None!

I entered the garden; the bower of youthful joys and mental cultivation was the next object I beheld. The moon just rose above the mountain, its first pale rays fell on the dark foliage, while it covered the hoops of osier woven by my hand when love and hope conspired

to guide it. I entered the parsonage, and hurried to my chamber: on a table lay my pistols—they were loaded; I armed myself, and descended. The high road lay at no great distance, but I had again to cross the corner of the park: all the sorrows of my life recurred at that dreadful moment; I recollect my continental journey from Glenowen; the early neglect of Lady Aubrey; the agonies that my little bosom felt when Sir Sidney first supplanted me. I was fit for any desperate deed of horror—I could have “drunk hot blood!” The remembrance of my situation, even at this distant period, is terrible!

Passing a narrow wood which skirted the park, I heard some one approaching. The moon’s feeble light barely rendered the surrounding objects visible. The sound of voices continued, and, in a few moments, Isabella approached, leaning on the arm of Sir Sidney Aubrey:

brey: at that instant an idea smote my brain, big with the blackest crime!—I shivered with conscious horror, while my hand grasped my pistol, and my tortured soul meditated *murder!*

They turned an angle, and continued to walk slowly. The brightness of the moon increased as it emerged from the horizon; I followed them at a convenient distance, and heard their conversation. The soft turf prevented their hearing my footsteps, and the thickness of the plantation afforded me many opportunities for concealment.

“ Generous girl! dearest Isabella!” cried Sir Sidney, “ remember your promise, and our attachment shall be inviolable. What a sacrifice have you made, for a being lost and wretched as I am! How shall I repay your goodness? My mother’s cruel and ambitious spirit will prevent my marrying; I know it will; but my obligation to you will not be

diminished by her inhumanity. I shall feel my heart, and all its grateful sentiments, bound to you for ever."

Isabella was silent; my indignation scarcely could refrain from committing an act of violence, while my hand grasped the instrument of death with a rigidity which rendered it motionless. Sir Sidney continued—

" We will return to Switzerland; you shall be my dear and inseparable associate: I will, by every kind and affectionate assiduity, teach you to forget the ill-fated Walsingham. I have opened my heart to you, Isabella; you have explored its innermost recesses. You must, by your pity and forgiveness, alleviate my sorrows. We will wander amidst Alpine scenery, we will imbibe the refreshing breezes of morning, and scatter with our footsteps the soft dews of the summer twilight. In the sultry season we will mingle with the happy peasantry;

and

and when the storms shall sweep the mountains of eternal snow, we will visit their abodes, and cheer them with that plenty which dark and freezing skies would otherwise deny them. Indeed, Isabella, we will never separate. The world and its vicissitudes shall be forgotten in the sweet and lasting intercourse of truth and sympathy."

The moon-beams fell exactly on the path where they strolled: Sir Sidney's arm encircled Isabella's waist, while her's was thrown carelessly over his shoulder. My brain was convulsed—the woods seemed to wave before me, as though they were shook by a trembling of the earth; the wind began to rise, it moaned over the mountains. I quickened my pace, and followed nearer their footsteps. At a small distance the path terminated in a dark and almost impervious wood of more than half a mile in length. Isabella again addressed Sir Sidney.—

" Poor

"Poor Walsingham!" said she; "he seems to be the very sport of fortune! I have loved him as a brother, but, rather than you should perish, I have resigned him. We will fly from Glen-owen, dearest Sidney; we will seek in solitude the repose you anticipate. I will devote my days to the task of participating your fate. I know that you can never marry without exposing yourself to ruin and disgrace by disobeying the commands of Lady Aubrey; yet we will not separate: I will mock the world's surmises; and, by the zeal and fidelity of my attachment, deprecate its scorn. Yet you must allow me sometimes to bestow a sigh when I think of your unhappy cousin."

"Name him not," interrupted Sir Sidney: "if you wish not to destroy my peace of mind, oh! never name him: he must be forgotten!"

Barba-

Barbarian ! thought I, why must the unhappy Walsingham be forgotten ? Why refused a tribute of remembrance ? Have you not blighted all his hopes ; rendered his remaining days a dark perspective ; withered his youth by misery, and triumphed over all the affections of his heart ? Is memory to be closed against his sorrows, and is his very name to be forgotten ?

They entered the wood ;—I could just distinguish the white drapery of Isabella's dress, whenever a vertical beam darted among the branches. After walking some time without uttering a syllable, Sir Sidney again broke the silence :

“ Swear never to reveal what has passed between us.”

“ I have already sworn,” answered Isabella.

“ Not even to your brother—”

“ To no mortal breathing,” replied Miss Hanbury.

“ My

" My mother's resentment would be implacable," cried my cousin; " I should be despised, accounted infamous—"

My agitation increased, as it blended the pangs of jealousy with the indignation of resentment. There remained not a doubt, from the conversation I had overheard, but that Sir Sidney was the seducer of Isabella: the libertine who had robbed her of her honour, and under the specious language of sentiment and affection, now soothed her into a promise of eternal secrecy. All the sufferings which I had witnessed in the mind of the betrayer, were recollected with an augmentation of disgust; they only proved,

—“ when the blood burns,
How prodigal the soul lends the tongue words.”

I considered Isabella as the dupe of her own vanity; and deemed the profi-

• Shakespeare.
gate

gate on whom she had lavished the treasure of her honour, as doubly culpable, because he was pre-eminently gifted with powers of mind, which should have been his guide, and her best safeguard. The subtlety of licentious villainy is commonly the associate of men, old in vice, and practised in dissimulation : Sir Sidney's youth and inexperience were ill suited to the machinations of seduction ; and I concluded that Isabella was more than half to blame, in yielding to his passion.

My cousin again awoke me from my torturing reverie by resuming the conversation :—“ Poor Walsingham !” exclaimed he ; “ I have, for a time, deprived him of happiness ; but half my fortune shall be his. I will place him above the persecutions of the world, the miseries of dependance. He preserved my life, when I was an infant, and his must not be devoted to sorrow.”

The

The pistols now trembled in my hands : his kindness disarmed my rage ; but my misery was rendered more acute, by the restraint which my feelings placed upon my vengeance.

The first sensation of gratitude was soon succeeded by conscious abhorrence. I considered myself as a mean and miserable accomplice in the ruin of Isabella ; as a wretch whose indignation and just sense of honour were to be subdued by base and interested prospects. Shall I accept Sir Sidney's friendship ? thought I. Shall I become blind to his vices ; the keeper of his secrets ; the minion of his profligate pursuits ? The idea made me shiver with repugnance ; I was close on the footsteps of that being, whom I considered as the vilest of the human race ;—the woman, whose frailty excited my contempt : yet, Rosanna, I envied the monster I despised—and still loved ;

yes,

yes, tenderly loved the victim I condemned.

On entering a glade, which opened to the park nearly facing the manor-house, Sir Sidney abruptly stopped. "Oh God!" exclaimed he, "how shall I obliterate the sorrows I have heaped on Walsingham?"

"By consigning them to the grave!" said I wildly, rushing forward, and presenting one of the pistols, which I still held with a convulsed and burning hand. He started. "The moment is come," continued I, "when one of us must perish. The voice of violated honour, the cause of ruined innocence, combine to accuse, and to condemn you. The task of justice devolves on me; therefore it is useless to protract the fatal hour. This pistol is already loaded; take it, and name your distance."

"This is insanity," cried my cousin, putting aside the pistol.

"Then

"Then have I care how far you tempt a maniac," said I, with a firm and indignant voice, which convinced my adversary that I was in no jesting humour.

"You will not assassinate me," said he calmly. "Ah! Walsingham! Do I deserve to perish by your hand?"

"I scorn the imputation," answered I; "I have a second pistol, and demand that honourable retribution which the laws of society have long since sanctioned."

"What law can sanction murder?" said Sir Sidney, throwing the pistol on the turf.

Isabella fell prostrate before me; she clasped my knees, and, bathed in tears, conjured me to desist. "Sir Sidney must not, shall not obey your cruel injunctions," said she, almost suffocated by the torrents which bathed her wild and frenzied features;—"You know

not

not what you meditate. He is your friend." "I reject his friendship," answered I. "The favour of a villain, disgraces the being whom it is meant to benefit." Sir Sidney looked earnestly at me. The clear light, which was now wholly unintercepted, displayed his features, and they bore the placid smile of defiance. Again I presented the pistol;—he took it:—Isabella clasped my neck;—she hung round me;—she could not speak;—her cheek, burning through tears, touched mine: I felt a convulsive throbbing in my heart; her agitation enflamed my jealousy, and augmented my despair. I threw her from me, and she fell senseless on the turf: her countenance was ghastly, her eyes were closed. Sir Sidney knelt beside her; he raised her on his arm; he kissed her cheek:—"Poor Isabella!" exclaimed he; "I was born to be thy destroyer!"

"Monster

"Monster unequalled!" said I, "either give me the satisfaction I demand, or expect to receive the chastisement which infamy and cowardice deserve from injured honour!"

He rose, and with a firm voice replied, "I value life too little to refuse the challenge—fire."

I pulled the trigger;—the ball missed my antagonist, who instantly discharged his pistol in the air. The report alarmed the family;—the domestics came running towards us:—I heard Colonel Aubrey's voice:—for Isabella's sake I dreaded an explanation: and, bewildered by contending agonies, escaped, leaving Sir Sidney to explain the adventure.

CHAP. XXVII.

I CONTINUED to walk hastily along the highway till day-break, when a heavy shower made me take shelter under a clump of firs, which covered a small eminence by the road side. The tops of the mountains which screened Glen-owen met my eyes; the light vapours floated over them, and their dark verdure served to contrast the bright blue sky, which the tepid shower had left unclouded. Every leaf was spangled with drops of rain, and the freshness of the morning air passing over the meadows, revived my senses, almost annihilated by the anguish of reflection.

As the mind settled into a deep despondency, the powers of memory became more minutely correct: every scene

scene was depicted in vivid colours, every object re-animated before me. The solitudes of Glenowen, from which I considered myself as banished for ever, seemed to hold a charm that hung about my heart, and weighed it down with sadness. Self-exiled, yet self-acquitted, I knew not whither I was going. I had left Isabella senseless, perhaps dead! Sir Sidney distracted. I had abandoned my kind, my generous tutor; rejected the liberal proposal made by Colonel Aubrey; and deserted my home like a guilty coward! Yet, so perverse was my destiny, that the very step which would have exculpated me, would have criminated Sir Sidney, and stigmatized the fame of Isabella. Weak and erring as I believed her to be, I still loved her; and feeling that my return to Glenowen would be the cause of her inevitable banishment, with a breaking heart I pursued my melancholy journey.

The

The prospect from which I was every moment receding, seemed to acquire new beauty as it lessened in perspective. Weary and exhausted, I took my seat on the root of a venerable tree, and, rapt in melancholy ruminations, wrote the following stanzas :

The savage hunter, who afar
On some rude mountain's pathless height
Sees, in the west, the twilight star
Just peering on the brow of night ;
O'er cliffs of ice, and plains of snow,
Still bends his long and lonesome way,
And, as he tempts the famish'd foe,
Anticipates the joys of day :

For he, by hope inspir'd, survey's
The moon's wan lustre gild the dome
That on some jutting point displays,
O blest retreat ! his cavern'd home ;
Where, when the journeying sun shall fade,
And cold oblivion's reign return,
The torch of love shall clear the shade,
And, 'midst the frozen desert, burn.

For love can warm the shiv'ring breast,
And bid Siberian fierceness sigh ;
Make flinty caves the house of rest,
And mock, with joy, the frowning sky.
But I, who taste no pleasing dreams
To smooth the paths of endless care,
Shall darkness know, 'mid sunny beams,
And find, in bow'rs of bliss, despair !

I was awakened from my slumber of imagination by the sound of a horse's hoofs, which advanced on full gallop. On a nearer view I recognized one of the domestics from Glenowen, and believing that he was dispatched to apprehend me for having attempted the life of Sir Sidney Aubrey, I resolved to resist, whatever consequences might follow. For this purpose I descended rapidly, and taking my post by the road side, awaited his approach. He perceived my mistake, and my determined manner excited a smile, as he stretched forth his hand, and presented two letters. I opened them hastily:

one

one bore the signature of Sir Sidney, the other of Colonel Aubrey. A small public house was within sight, and I dismissed the servant with a message, that I would send answers to both the packets as soon as I could write them.

With perturbation that was almost insupportable, I began to read Sir Sidney's letter; when the following contents overwhelmed me with sorrow:

“ You fly, Walsingham, with an agonized mind, and the additional pang of supposing that you leave behind you a name tarnished with reproach. Tranquillize your wounded spirit, and rest assured that the events of last night never will be divulged: I have enjoined Isabella to secrecy. Lady Aubrey supposes that the pistol was fired by me, and is at a loss to account for your precipitate retreat from Glenowen.

“ Walsingham! to what a trial has my fatal passion reduced you!—how

important has been the sacrifice which you have made for my repose:—for my *repose!*—alas! that word must be erased from the tablet of my fate for ever!

“ I conjure you to be careful of your safety; to combat your adverse fortune with the heroism of exalted virtue; and to accept, from one who loves you dearer than a brother, an income which will place you above the humiliations of dependence. This small return is due to you, as my relation, my friend, and my preserver, even had you never relinquished Isabella,—the pure, the generous, the heroic Isabella.

“ I inclose a letter to my mother’s banker, with instructions to secure to you an annuity of four hundred pounds, and to pay into your hands one thousand for your immediate necessities. Reject not the paltry tribute: add not to my sorrows the regret of knowing that

that I have lost your friendship ; and believe me, when I swear by all that is dear to honour or sacred to sentiment, that my good wishes towards you shall never cease but with my existence. This world has few pleasures for a being born to linger in one gloomy round of chilling despondency : my earliest hours were embittered by constraint ; my last moments will be devoted to compunction. Ill-fated Isabella ! when I think of her—when I behold her earliest attachment blighted by my ungovernable passions—I shrink almost to annihilation. Yet, Walsingham, could I withdraw the mysterious veil which is placed between us, you would not reproach but commiserate my sufferings.

“ Your mind, for some days past, has laboured under the dominion of deceptive circumstances : you have contemplated every object through a false medium ; your suspicions have magnified

fied ills, and your passions created imaginary sorrows. Yet, spare Isabella the anguish of supposing that you are doubtful of her virtue, and exonerate me from the imputation of being her seducer!— She is spotless as the snow upon the mountain: I am incapable of a dis-honourable action. It would be little less than imbecile to deceive you at this momentous crisis: throw away the scepticism which will only precipitate you deeper into error, and believe my most solemn assurance, that *I* never shall be the lover of Isabella.

“ Our fondest propensities too frequently betray themselves while we most endeavour to deceive others; nay, even while we think that others are deceived, for our silence will speak in evidence of our weakness, and sometimes more eloquently than the most laboured language. Where then is the lover to fly from detection? where is he

he to conceal the tyrant of his bosom, except in that deep solitude which would nurse him into madness? Philosophy, with all its boasted powers, cannot subdue the miseries of affection; it may triumph over past ills, or those that are approaching; but present sorrows seldom fail to triumph over philosophy *. Let this maxim excite your forgiveness, and plead in extenuation of my conduct—at least as far as it wears the semblance of culpability.

“ Walsingham, adieu! I know the human mind too well to bid you be patient; I sympathize too sincerely in your sorrows to hope that admonition can offer them an antidote: I can only conjure you to combat the passions of your heart, and to look forward with confidence to those hours when I shall

* “ La philosophie triomphe aisément des maux passés, et des maux à venir; mais les maux présens triomphent d'elle.”—ROCHEFOUCAULT.

WALSINGHAM; OR,
no longer prove an obstacle to their
gratification. Farewell!

“ SIDNEY AUBREY.”

I read the letter again and again: the noble nature of my young and volatile cousin evinced itself in every line. I lamented my own precipitation; I cursed my fate for having pointed my affections towards the object of Sir Sidney's wishes.

Still I could not believe that Isabella was innocent; for the conversation, which I had overheard in the wood on the preceding night, convinced me that she was the victim of my rival's superior attractions, and his mother's unbending ambition.

I hastened towards the small public-house, whose roof I had observed from the plantation of firs, and, as soon as I could procure pen, ink, and paper, wrote the succeeding answer:

To

" To Sir SIDNEY AUBREY.

" I have kept my promise: I have relinquished Isabella, and you will see me no more. The world is now before me; it presents a vast and variegated scene, replete with vicissitudes, and peopled with all sorts of men. Affliction may be my companion, but I trust that I shall not be wholly vanquished by its severity. Born to dependence, fostered by the pity of a stranger, enlightened by the precepts of philanthropy, I commence my solitary journey—friendless, unknown, and wretched! The labyrinths of life present no flowers to my aching senses: all is dreary, and beset with thorns; yet I must pursue my way, or, like a despicable coward, fall, and perish.

" You will, perhaps, blame me for flying; you will call that pusillanimity,

which is the strongest effort of human fortitude. Your safety, and Isabella's happiness—if she can be happy in the consciousness of dishonour—require my departure. I have resigned every prospect of bliss; I have relinquished every hope of consolation that fancy formed, or ripening reason cherished; I have condemned my proud aspiring heart to an eternal penance. I will learn to suffer, and I will suffer in silence. You shall not feed your passion on my sorrows: Isabella shall never have the power to reproach me.

“I conjure you—since a combination of events has favoured your illicit triumph—I conjure you, by all the rapture which your glowing mind anticipates, to guard Isabella from the malice of the world. Let the fatal secret, which I shudder to remember, be consigned for ever to oblivion. Protect her from the taunts of low malevolence,

volence, the exultations of her own sex, the licentiousness of yours. In your arms she will forget the sorrows of Walsingham; in the soft luxurious lap of splendour she will cease to lament the purity she has relinquished. Let her, by deeds of virtue, compensate for the chastity she has violated; let the benevolence of her heart evince the glowing affections of her nature, and adorn that cheek with the tear of philanthropy which would else glow with the blush of indiscretion.

“ Your proffered independence and your present bounty I reject with scorn; and I charge you, if you value your own safety, never again to insult my pride by supposing that I would accept the means of life from that hand which has robbed it of every treasure. I will toil, I will exert every faculty of my mind; but I never will condescend to receive a benefit from the seducer of Isabella.

D. 6.

“ Every

" Every prospect of happiness opened to your view ; you were the favourite of fortune, the darling of nature ! your mind was gifted proudly, your heart was moulded to receive the impressions of virtue and sensibility ! I lament that the gloom of conscious guilt should overshadow the bright perspective, or that the poison of compunction should contaminate the source of every future pleasure : for the demon Conscience is no sophist; the unvarnished admonitions of that power, whose whispers are heard even amidst the loudest din of revelry, will condemn you; and time will scatter thorns upon your pillow, when passion shall retire from the glances of returning reason. Farewell !

" W. A."

Colonel Aubrey's letter contained only a few lines, and those briefly tendering his friendship, and conjuring me

to

to wait for him at Bath. My resolution to enter the army was now the only solace which my mind could experience. I resolved to make the best of my way towards Bristol, to solicit the protection and temporary aid of my early friend Mr. Randolph ; and, in case success should attend my experiment, to accept Colonel Aubrey's proposal, and return with him to Gibraltar.

A ten pound note and a few guineas, which I had brought with me from Glenowen, was now all my fortune ; I therefore determined to pursue my journey on foot, and by the most rigorous economy to arm myself against the dreadful necessity of soliciting assistance from the proud or ostentatious. I recollect that the sharpest pang which adversity can suffer, is the stern denial of those whose only triumph over enlightened minds springs from the caprices of fortune ; who, but for the accursed droſs
which

which gives consequence to villany, grace to deformity, and the semblance of perfection even to the most degenerate, which can purchase adulation from the vulgar, obedience from the base, and applause from the ignorant, would crouch before the majesty of virtue, and shrink at the effulgence of genius, as the shadows of night fly before the sun and vanish into nothing.

With a dejected mind I approached that ancient city where commerce pours her treasures into the lap of industry, but where genius has often sought in vain for an asylum ; where Savage*, the unhappy offspring of an inhuman mother, pined in a loathsome prison, and at last expired beneath the persecutions of adversity !—where Chatterton first felt the inspiration of the muses, and trembling left the wild effusions of fancy

• The poet.

should

should fail to procure the patronage of pride, concealed beneath the veil of fiction those laurels which fame designed to decorate his temples. Poor boy! ill-fated child of genius and of sorrow! long didst thou court the applause of dull and envious minds; often didst thou receive the niggard boon which, while it stung thy sensibility, roused thee to emulation! As I contemplated the sombre spires of thy native city, imagination presented thy form at that moment when thou badst it farewell for ever! Fancy led me to trace the wild enthusiasm which animated thy features, and gave them an expression touching yet terrific! The pride of scorn, the dignity of genius, the pang of fond regret, the dread of want, the consciousness of mental powers, conspired to agitate thy soul, and tear thee from thy kindred. Gentle kindred! who wanted not the will but power to hold thee. Can wealth exonerate

nerate those relentless beings who saw
thee exiled, poor and unpatronized,
driven to wander, without a friend to
guide thee,—

To live by mental toil, e'en when the brain
Could scarce its trembling faculties sustain ;
To mark the dreary minutes slowly creep,
Each day to labour and each night to weep ;
Till the last murmur of thy frantic soul
In proud concealment from its mansion stole ;
While envy, springing from her lurid cave,
Snatch'd the young laurel from thy rugged grave.
So, the pale primrose, sweetest bud of May,
Scarce wakes to beauty ere it feels decay ;
While baleful weeds their hidden poisons pour,
Choke the green sod, and wither ev'ry flow'r !

Oh! Chatterton! when fate shall
glance over the solitary waste which ages
shall mark with the ravages of time,
pity shall consecrate the spot where thou
art left to perish ! while Nature, scorn-
ing the monuments of ignorance and
wealth, shall crush them to the centre,
and consign the names they bore to
eternal oblivion.

CHAP. XXVIII.

ON my arrival at Bristol I stopped at the first inn; and after writing a short note to Mr. Randolph, dispatched it by a messenger, whom I ordered to wait for an answer. At any other period, in any other state of mind, I should have obtruded myself on my early patron without ceremony; but sensibility shrinks at the persecutions of fortune, till reason asserts her turn to reign, and arms the mind with fortitude to resist its enemy.

The next task my pen undertook was the task of gratitude, and, with a throbbing heart, I began my confession

“ *To the Reverend WALTER HANBURY.*

“ I KNOW not how to address you; and yet my mind cannot remain tranquil under

under the painful load of conscious accusation. You have, from my earliest infancy, awakened my soul to that emulation, which builds its every hope of happiness on the omnipotence of truth! you have taught me to consider unsullied honour as an invulnerable shield ; and I have placed it before my senses in the full confidence of security. You have conjured me never to conceal from you the sensations of my breast; hear, oh ! my friend, hear the confessions of that heart, which even your wisdom and philosophy could not arm against the susceptibilities of nature.

“ I adored Isabella! she was the object of all my hopes, the arbitress of my destiny. The agonies which assailed my soul became acute in proportion as I felt the necessity of concealing them. Dreadful necessity! thou incentive to sorrow ! thou tormentor ! whose malice only urges the feeling heart to the last pang of

of self-constraint, which like the subterraneous flame augments as it finds obstruction, and at last bursts forth with ungovernable fury.

“ Isabella is amiable, beautiful, and accomplished! What am I? Alas! I dare not think on what I am. Reflection must be deadened, or despair will be triumphant.

“ Her form is perpetually before me; I behold her in my waking hours, in fancy I behold her, gliding like a meteor athwart the deep gloom of mental desolation: I close my eyes but to dream of Isabella; I start from my feverish slumbers, but to know that I am wretched.

“ Why did you teach me to idolize a phantom formed to mislead me? Why did you unfold the fairest buds of reason only to convince me that they would be prematurely blasted? The dark colour of my fate would have been congenial to a life of study and seclusion; I could

could have braved the tempest which my adverse fortune menaced, had I never basked in the sun-beams of delight. Oh! why was I not inured to anguish? Why did the vision Hope present a gay and rich perspective only to deceive me?

“ Isabella was the associate of my childhood, the companion of my studies: our actions, our pursuits, our thoughts, were regulated by sympathy and sanctioned by virtue. We were united by the sweet unison of mind, which harmonized all our faculties. Truth was our monitor; we were enamoured of her precepts, and the path which we trod was strewed with the fairest flowers of fancy: but they were fragile! the wintry tempest scattered them; the leaves are withered, and the thorns alone remain to fester in my bosom.

“ A new scene is unfolded to my view; I must rush amidst the turmoil of camps;

camps ; I must repair to fields of carnage, and forget—hard task !—that this world of sorrow is enriched by such a jewel as Isabella ! Had I but the consolation to look forward with the hope that my laurels would bloom beneath her smiles, danger would be courted as the harbinger of bliss, and the loudest din of arms be pleasing to my senses.—What will now be the incitement to valour?—Despair ! What the object of every enterprize?—Annihilation !

“ I shall not recede from the path which your example has set before me ; I shall not deviate from the precepts which you have inculcated. My few remaining days shall be dedicated to the service of my country, and my last sigh shall be a sigh of gratitude for your inestimable kindness.

“ W. A.”

I waited with impatience for the return of my messenger, and anticipated

at least a temporary gleam of consolation in the hospitable abode of my early benefactor. Many years had elapsed since I had last seen him ; but the impression of gratitude had sunk deeper in my heart by the increasing power of thought and affection. At length the porter returned with the distressing intelligence that Mr. Randolph had quitted Bristol, and dissolved the firm of his house previous to his departure. My disappointment was terrible. Every hope seemed to vanish, and I began to consider myself as the victim of persecution. In a place more famed for opulence than philanthropy, what could I expect ? My chagrin was unutterable !

Fatigued by mental anxiety as well as bodily exertion, I retired early to my chamber; but sleep is ever an alien to the feeling mind labouring under the pressure of care and disappointment. I closed my eyes in vain ; a thousand visi-
ons

sions occupied my brain, and tortured it incessantly. At length the mingling hum of sounds beneath my window informed me of the hour, and I descended to the streets, which were thronged with passengers, for the occupations of the day had begun, and every man was busy in the scene of commerce. I strolled to a neighbouring coffee-house, where, having ordered my breakfast, I sat down to ruminate on my forlorn situation. A Bath newspaper lay before me, and the first article which met my eye was the following advertisement—

“ Wanted, to accompany a young nobleman on his travels, a private tutor, classically educated, of good morals and respectable connections. His salary will be considerable and his prospects advantageous, provided he renders himself worthy of future patronage. Such a person may hear of a situation by sending

sending his name and place of abode to Lady Kencarth's, Hanover Square, London."

I read the proposal several times; and after weighing it in my own mind, thought it more eligible than my plan of accompanying Colonel Aubrey to Gibraltar. I was eager to know the world, and to travel with a young nobleman was the surest road to the knowledge for which I panted. The change of scenery and diversity of occupations would, I flattered myself, tend more to the restoration of my mind's repose, than the scenes of sanguinary warfare to which a military life would lead me: after a few minutes of cool reflection, I answered the advertisement, and began my breakfast somewhat less perplexed than when I entered the coffee-house.

I had in my letter requested that the answer might be directed to me at the
Post

Post Office, Bath : I therefore resolved to hasten thither without delay, and to wait patiently for its arrival. An hour before sun-set I quitted Bristol, and proceeded on foot to the place of my next destination.

CHAP. XXIX.

THE sun, before I had advanced three miles on my journey, began to sink beneath the horizon. I walked slowly ; and, deeply ruminating on events past, scarcely knew how the present moments hastened towards the close of day. The deepening shades of twilight began to envelope the surrounding scenery ; the air was sultry, the sky overcast with gathering clouds, which in a very short period of time obscured the crimson

glow which spread itself along the west. I continued to tread my lonely path, till night completely wrapped every object in a temporary oblivion, when at intervals the sound of footsteps at no great distance met my ear, and roused me from my reverie.

I stopped and listened. No star illumined the heavens; no light of any kind enlivened the gloom that surrounded me. Still I pursued my way, and still the stranger followed, till we came to a solitary part of the road, when the sound of his footsteps ceased, and I began to apprehend some mischief. The sky, which had been overcast at the close of evening, now broke into a tempest; the thunder rolled tremendously, and the rain poured in torrents; I was at a loss what to do, when by a flash of vivid lightning, I perceived the person who had followed, standing before me. I drew my pistol from my pocket, and suddenly

suddenly halted. He receded a few steps, and, in a mournful voice, addressed me.—

“ Traveller,” said he, “ if fortune smiles on you, and benevolence warms your heart, you will succour the unhappy man who is now before you. Too proud to demand charity from those who know me, I adopt this mode of solicitation to spare my breast one half the pang of a refusal.”

Here he paused, and I could distinguish, by the tremulous tone in which he uttered the concluding words, that his agitation checked the capability of proceeding.

The abruptness of his address and the solemnity of the scene around us at first startled me: yet I had not power to hurt the wretched petitioner: I returned my pistol into my pocket. I will not destroy thee, unhappy mortal! thought I, because

cause I am a fellow-traveller in the path of affliction.

He continued : “ I perceive, by the lightning, that you are armed, and yet I do not tremble : if you will not meliorate my sorrows by a sum, small in comparison with the magnitude of my grief, the most merciful act you can perform will be that of annihilating its victim.”

I requested that he would inform me what money would be of use to him, intimating the narrow limits of my power, and my earnest wish that it might not be too circumscribed for the relief of his necessities. After a silence of some minutes, during which we walked slowly, side by side, he resumed the conversation.

“ The rectitude of my heart is the cause of every pang that at this moment assails it. To render justice where justice is due, I have stripped myself of my last guinea. My integrity shuddered at the

the idea of fraud, and I may with a safe conscience declare, before the God of retribution, that I am a complete bankrupt, in hope as well as fortune." My soul sympathized in the sorrows of the forlorn stranger, and I listened eagerly to know the sum that would relieve him.

"Alas!" exclaimed he, raising his voice as if to repress a sigh that struggled in his bosom, "my situation is no less singular than unfortunate! I possess a mind too exalted to owe an obligation to an enemy; and at the same time too susceptible to unburden my afflictions to those whose bosoms would ache at the recital. Goaded by adversity, involved in engagements, and menaced by disgrace, I had no hope of avoiding despair, but by flying from the scene of desolation. I am now hastening towards London, there to await the event, which for a time has exiled me from home."

"Perhaps you have been driven by vexation to fly, when a more prudent step might have checked the progress of disgrace," said I. "Were you not rash in quitting your home without the means of life?"

"My honour, my integrity were at stake," answered he: "I could not stoop so low as to embezzle that property which was due to my creditors."

"I am only master of a small sum," said I, "but if you will share it with me, my hand is ready to offer the participation." He thanked me, and begged that I would candidly declare the extent of my ability to serve him. I knew not how to answer such a question: ashamed to confess myself a poor and wandering fugitive, yet earnest to convince my fellow traveller that, though fortune was my foe, humanity was not an alien to my bosom, I hesitated; my cheek glowed, my heart throbbed in the conflict betwixt

betwixt shame and pity ; when he again addressed me.

" A few guineas will pay my expences to London ;—a few months may restore me to reputation and society. I would not ask your aid, but that I have left behind me all I could collect amidst the ravages of misfortune. Yes ! all ! even to the last penny ! What can integrity do more ?"

The ten pound note, which was above the moiety of my fortune, I presented to the unhappy stranger. " Take this," said I, " and may the God of mercies inspire your soul with that fortitude which will arm it against the approaches of despair ! Now," continued I, " let me solicit one proof of confidence on your part : let me know your name ; not with a wish that you should ever repay the trivial service I have rendered you ; but that I may hear, at some future period,

of your better fortune ; and rejoice in your happiness, as I now sympathize in your distress."

He took a letter from his pocket, and tearing off the superscription, presented it to me. " This *was* my address," said he, sighing deeply ; " on what speck of this habitable globe I may reside in future, Heaven only knows!" He could not proceed ; gratitude filled every vein in his afflicted heart with unutterable sensations ; I had not resolution to ask another question, we therefore shook hands, and parted.

I bid
obligation and now bid my original
adversaries fair leave in this little
soliloquy. I beseeche you to forgive me
no scruples to doing one visit to sin
son ; consider how well you did us all
when you left us. If you do not like a
boy hereafter, send him to us again. I only bid
you

CHAP. XXX.

IN a short time after I separated from my forlorn companion, I arrived at Bath; where, on entering the first inn, and being ushered into a parlour, I proceeded to examine the paper which the stranger had given me: judge of my consternation, my grief, my surprise, when I read the address of Mr. Randolph, in the hand-writing of the detested Lady Aubrey. The paper was covered with lines on the back of the superscription; and, as soon as astonishment gave me power to unfold it, I read the following words, continuing a subject which had been begun on the other half of the letter:

— “ He absconded last night without assigning any reason for his departure: the arrogance of his mind, and the de-

pravity of his heart, will render his absence scarcely a matter of regret. Should he attempt to impose on your credulity, or to initiate himself into your favour, I caution you not to trust him. He is unworthy of your esteem; and will only disgrace your friendship, by exemplifying morals, that have at last set reformation at defiance. His sanguinary attempt on the life of Sir Sidney will justify the propriety of this opinion, and authorize me in saying, that he must, henceforth, be an alien to his family. My generous and amiable son has attempted to vindicate Mr. Ainsforth; but my faithful servant, Mrs. Blagden, can bring proofs of his criminal intentions. She heard the report of the pistol, and saw the cowardly assassin making his escape over the park-wall of Glen-owen."

My eyes seemed rivetted on the paper; my whole frame fixed by astonishment,

ment, as though every nerve had been petrified. My own necessities, and the calumnies of Lady Aubrey, excited sensations which soon subsided; but the regret which I felt on the conviction of Mr. Randolph's ruin, sunk deep into my heart, and overwhelmed it with sorrow. I recollect the scene of opulence in which he had so long exemplified virtues rarely found amidst the splendors of prosperity; and I grieved, that amidst so much surrounding shadow, the star of benevolence, which warmed the bosom of my patron, should be obscured by sorrow and adversity.

As soon as I had recovered from the surprise which Lady Aubrey's letter occasioned, I rushed forth from the inn, and hastened to the bridge which crosses the Avon on entering Bath. There I waited till past midnight, in hopes of seeing the unfortunate friend to whom I owed so many obligations. But my

wishes were unsuccessful, and I returned to my lodging, vexed, hopeless, and disappointed. The mingling inquietudes that assailed my mind, during the remainder of the night, can better be imagined than described. I would have given half my days to labour and affliction, could I have supported Mr. Randolph by the one, and lightened his bosom's load by participating the other.

Early in the morning I quitted my chamber, and walked towards the environs of the city. I had scarcely proceeded a mile, when I met Colonel Aubrey's chaise : he was alone. The post-boy was ordered to stop, and the generous heart greeted me with joy, that was too natural to be the glozing semblance of friendship. He descended from his carriage ; the postillion was ordered to follow, and we walked slowly back to the inn. I frankly confessed all that had passed, on the night previous to my quitting

quitting Glenowen ; and firmly resolved never to return thither, during the life-time of the detestable Lady Aubrey.

My kind and liberal friend endeavoured to soothe my distress, by the most generous assurances of eternal regard and protection. A servant had hired apartments on the South Parade, and Colonel Aubrey, with little persuasion, prevailed on me to remain with him during his residence at Bath.

My spirits were, every hour, more heavily weighed down by despondency, which all the reasoning, and all the attentions of friendship, could not alleviate. Colonel Aubrey frequently mingled in society, but never could induce me to accompany him. Three weeks passed, and no answer arrived from Lady Kencaorth ; my chagrin augmented by the increasing indisposition of Colonel Aubrey, and I began to consider all the efforts of fortitude as weak and ineffectual.

tual. I marked the languid eye hourly losing its intelligent lustre ; I beheld the manly form withering to debility : yet his mind did not shrink at the approaches of annihilation ; and the ravages of corporeal pain, stole no trait of mental power from the object of its persecution. He treated me with the affection of a father : I revered, - I loved him, as though I had been his son ; my assiduity kept pace with his zeal ; I had only to feel a wish, and it was gratified before I could disclose it.

My melancholy humour at last began to throw a gloom over Colonel Aubrey's pursuits ; and he refused to accept every invitation, rather than leave me to the indulgence of mournful reveries.

As I found that neither an assumed vivacity, nor repeated persuasions, could induce him to seek for society abroad, while I remained at home, cheerless and desponding, the only step which I would take,

take, was that of accompanying him in his fashionable visits. It was a sacrifice of my own feelings, but it was prompted by gratitude ; and being conducive to Colonel Aubrey's health as well as amusement, I could no longer hesitate in making it. My friend anticipated a change in the temper of my mind by an intercourse with the world, and an opportunity soon presented itself for trying the experiment : a ball and supper was announced in the Crescent ; we were invited, and I promised to attend him.

On entering the room, the blaze of light, the sound of the music, and the beauty of the women fascinated my attention, and I was incapable of advancing a single step beyond the door, when Colonel Aubrey desired me to follow him. I looked like a creature just wakened into life ; bewildered, and over-powered by admiration and wonder ; when Colonel Aubrey whispered, " Walsingham,

singham, follow me, and recollect yourself: you must endeavour to evince a knowledge of the forms of the world, and not betray the childish embarrassment of a mere noviciate, unless you mean to be the butt of ridicule for the evening."

I felt the propriety of the lesson, but my feet were still rooted to the ground, and my eyes fixed by the attraction of resistless beauty! Colonel Aubrey took my arm, and led me to the farthest end of the ball-room, where he presented me to the fair priestess who presided in the temple of enchantment. It was Lady Emily Delvin.

Though I had entirely forgot the person of Lady Emily, the adventure at Nice was still perfect in my memory; not only on account of the impression which it made at the time, but because it had frequently been the subject of discourse with Mr. Hanbury, since the period when it happened. I felt disconcerted when

when Colonel Aubrey pronounced the name of Lady Emily, and a foolish pride, which I am almost ashamed to acknowledge, whispered the hope that she had entirely forgot me. It was as I wished : “ the little negro Walsingham” had been wholly obliterated from her remembrance ; while Mr. Ainsforth, the friend of Colonel Aubrey, was treated with a marked attention, at once flattering to my vanity, and soothing to my afflictions.

Lady Emily, though in her thirty-sixth year, was still handsome and engaging ; for, by residing many years on the continent, she had wholly divested herself of that chilling formality, which in England throws a gloom over society, and gives a peculiar awkwardness to the fairest forms that are moulded by the hand of Nature ! Her conversation was bewitching, and her manners, though somewhat tinctured with affectation,
pleased,

pleased, while they deluded the senses with their ease and vivacity. Though she had not the mild and soul-subduing graces of Isabella, she had something so irresistible in her looks and actions, so lively, so *piquante*, that I felt wholly unembarrassed, before I had passed many minutes in her society.

Seated on a sofa with the fashioned Lady Emily, at once the object of her attention and curiosity, I entered into familiar conversation on various subjects, and my words flowed with unconstrained ease, when she checked my volubility by asking me if I had ever travelled. I replied, that "in my infancy I had visited the continent."

"What parts of France or Italy have you seen?" said Lady Emily.

"I never went farther south than Nice," answered I, somewhat confused by her question.

"Ainsforth!"

"Ainsforth!" said she, pausing:—
"I have some faint recollection of the name. Do you remember ever having met me, while on the continent? Can you call to mind the least circumstance respecting me? I am really solicitous to date our first meeting from some remote period, in order to claim the freedom of an old acquaintance."

I knew not what to say. Truth, after a short struggle, triumphed over pride, and I answered, that "I remembered her well, at Nice, in the society of Lady Aubrey."

From this moment all my consequence vanished:—Lady Emily was silent:—her eyes, with a vacant fixture, bespoke her thoughts, wandering back through the mazes of time, and little pleased with the closing perspective. In a few minutes she rose abruptly from her seat, and left me vexed, mortified, humbled,

humbled, and more out of spirits than even when I entered the ball-room.

CHAP. XXXI.

As I wished to avoid dancing, I strolled to an adjoining apartment, where I found a large circle of both sexes, seated round a table : men intent on the turn of a card, which was destined either to ruin themselves or their intimate associates ; and women, sacrificing all the graces of mind and person, wholly absorbed in the vortex of destruction. I cannot describe the disgust which I felt, while I contemplated features, decked with the bloom of youth, yet distorted by internal emotions ! Bosoms, which nature formed for the abodes of gentleness and virtue, burning with rage, and panting with disappoint-

disappointment ! Eyes, darting forth the lightnings of despair ; and lips, pallid with the apprehension of impending ruin ! Is this, what men call the world ? thought I. Are these the votaries of pleasure, the children of luxurious life ? Am I to emerge from obscurity for such society ;—to obliterate every solid charm that sweetens the cup of existence ;—to crush every fair and opening flower for a bitter potion of regret, and a path overrun with weeds that will destroy me ? The sombre shade of scholastic labour, now, by comparison with the scene before me, was the sweet retirement of rational delight ! The solitudes, the mountain solitudes of Glenowen, were the haunts of meditation, soothing to the heart, and gratifying to the senses. Ah ! Rosanna ! Why—why did I ever leave them ?

Colonel Aubrey having observed my emotions on entering the ball-room, had returned

returned to his lodgings early in the evening, without apprizing me of his intentions. I had taken my seat at the supper-table, before I discovered his departure, and it was then too late to relinquish my situation. The board was covered with a profusion of luxuries; the most delicious wines were distributed with prodigality; and the band continued to play the most animated compositions during the repast. Time seemed to fly with more rapidity than usual, and the enchanting circle rose from table before I had leisure to contemplate one half the beauty that surrounded me.

I had, without being conscious of it, drank a much larger portion of wine than was my usual custom; and feeling no inclination to dance, I returned to the faro room. The spirit of mischief there revelled with renovated vigour. Gold flew round, like dust before the whirlwind; and dissipation reared her standard

ard over the brow of reason, terribly triumphant. It was the pandemonium of licentiousness; every vice was tolerated, every mind contaminated by the force of pernicious example. On one side sat a venerable sybil, withered by age, and endeavouring to obliterate the *memento mori* of time, by the gaudy colours of artificial deformity. Poor atom of mortality! thought I; how vain, how horrible are all thy experiments! I was rapt in a profound reverie, when a loud burst of laughter awoke my attention.

It came from an exalted mass of rotundity, whose outward appearance bespoke domestic affliction: a sable habit, which decorated her uncouth figure, was her *only* mark of regret for the loss of a lovely and amiable child, who, a few days before, had become the tenant of a sepulchre! Seated with her favourite knave, the golden heap before her increased

creased or diminished, as fortune either smiled or frowned on her dissipated voluntary: yet, the chance of a card did not wholly occupy her mind; she was, by turns, the gamester and the coquette; one moment staking hundreds with the insensibility of practised folly, and the next, dressing her coarse and rugged features in all the grotesque affectation of amorous allurement; while time trembled at her temerity, and vice looked more than hideous amidst the furrows of antiquity. I shrank from so disgusting an object, and turning towards a beautiful girl, whose face had, at supper, attracted my attention, remarked the absurd manners of her opposite neighbour: but my consternation is not to be described when she answered, "To be sure she is a curst comical old devil, and yet there is something so dashing in whatever she does, that one cannot help liking her."

"Is

"Is she a particular friend of yours?" said I, as soon as I recovered from my electric shock.

"O! I don't claim the honour of her friendship," replied the young adventurer; "I want nothing from her but her *rouleaus*: and she is so d——d cunning, there is no touching her, even for a poney*."

"Are you fond of riding?" said I, not comprehending the term she had used at the conclusion of her eloquent speech.

She stared, and after a moment's reflection replied, with a loud laugh, "Where in the name of Heavon were you born? The devil take me, if I don't believe you are some emigrated hermit, who seeing no fun in a woollen shirt and a straw matrass, left his hovel, and his

* Half a *rouleau*, or twenty-five guineas.

experimental knowledge, for the next tenant. How long have you relinquished wild herbs and spring water? Come with me, and learn to relish better fare, or your character will soon be destroyed in the world of rational refinement." So saying, she grasped my hand, and hurrying back to the supper-room, filled a large goblet with champaign, which she instantly swallowed, after drinking, "confusion to all anchorets!" The challenge was not to be resisted, and I followed her example, with "perish the heart that is insensible to beauty."

"Bravo!" exclaimed the airy sylph of dissipation. "Upon my soul, you are already a new being! and I question whether Lady Fubsy won't fall in love with you. She's cursedly fond of you male creatures, and has always some poor devil on her domestic establishment for the support of her reputation."

"I should

"I should rather think that her reputation would suffer by such an inmate," said I gravely.

"Come, come, none of your cursed affectation!" replied the laughing monitress. "A woman's character, in our unprejudiced circle, rises in proportion as she augments her catalogue of conquests, till the busy and censorious grow tired of observing her. A female of the *haut ton* is a celestial orb of universal attraction! and who would be such a curst fool as to talk of spots in the sun?—Here comes a living sample."

At this moment the Duchess of Riversford sauntered towards us, attended by her daughters and Lord Powderwood. The young ladies threw themselves on a sofa, while the Viscount amused himself with contemplating his own beauties in a large mirror, which was fixed behind it."

"I shall leave Bath to-morrow," cried the polygraphic of Narcissus. "What with the morning's stewing, and the evening's fatigue, a man should have the robust nerves of Hercules to preserve his person in any tolerable degree. My face looks as shrivelled as old Lady Amaranth's." Here a loud laugh interrupted him. "I wonder," continued his lordship, "how any disciple of love can venture in these misty regions of sulphur and hot water!—enemies that are ever hostile to beauty and the graces."

"You never were more mistaken," cried the rose-lipped duchess. "I come always once a year to Bath in order to repair the ravages of winter——"

"Of Time, you mean," cried her grace's eldest daughter.

"Hah! comical e'faith!" exclaimed Lord Powderwood, as he placed a small patch on the corner of his upper lip.

"I'll

"I'll be crucified if anything but a woman could have uttered such a savage inuendo!"

"'Tis very true, notwithstanding," cried Lady Arabella. "My mother will never believe that there is such a traveller as Time, till he overtakes her."

"Who talks of Time?" vociferated Lady Ethiop. "Here is my friend Lady Parkintown, who is the only person that knows how to kill Time."

"She drowns him," said Lord Powderwood gravely. Again a clamorous laugh echoed through the apartment.

"I hate the very name of Time!" cried Lady Ethiop.

"I do not wonder at your antipathy," interrupted the young lord, "when he hourly presents your ladyship so dark a prospect."

"Witty devil!" exclaimed the duchess; "it is impossible to be angry

with the wretch, though he professes to despise us.”

Lady Parkintown and Miss Casino consoled themselves with a bottle of champaign, while Lord Powderwood retouched the *rouge* on his downy cheek ; and the disconsolate duchess sighed an adieu to love, as she threw her fading form on the pillow of repentance.

I now returned to the faro table, and was soon followed by the group of good-natured friends. I longed to try whether Fortune would smile on me, and thought it would be wise, in the present state of my finances, to conciliate her favour.

The fair Mrs. Winkwell was a looker on ; she frequently persuaded me to venture a few stakes, merely as a trial of my temper. “ You seem quite a novice at the gaming-table,” said she ; “ do you never play ? ”

“ Never.”

“ Never.”

“ Heavens !” exclaimed the duchess of Riversford, half-smiling and looking earnestly in my face ; “ where have you been educated ? and how have you avoided so universal a passion ?”

“ By associating with unfashionable men, and with women who had less exalted propensities,” said I gravely.

“ Pretty queer devils !” exclaimed Miss Casino. “ What cursed bores such society must present ! How could you ever bring your mind to the task of quitting the delectable creatures ?”

I made no reply.

Lady Ethiop persuaded me to hazard a few guineas, merely by way of experiment. Still I resisted, and still her ladyship continued to torment me. “ Nothing shall convince me,” said she, “ but that you are a very miser, except your instantly taking a seat at the table.”

"Why will you tempt unguarded innocence to tread the paths of folly?" cried Lady Fubsy, with a tone so provokingly ironical, that I felt the spirit of contradiction stirring within me.

"Perhaps he is forbid to play," said Lady Amaranth, nodding her flaxen wig over the *parterre* of folly.

"It must be by his mamma then," cried Miss Casino; "for he looks too wise to be married!"

"And too sanctified to be gay," added Lady Parkintown. "He had better come and take another bottle with me."

"Let the poor fellow alone," cried Mrs. Casino, "perhaps he has reasons for refusing. It is not every fortune that can bear the chances of a gaming-table."

"Then he may borrow that of his friend or his mistress," said Mr. Winkwell.
"No man should play that has any thing
of

of his own to hazard, except his wife; and she, in the modern school, scarcely belongs to him."

"Perhaps he thinks it irreligious to gamble on a Sunday morning," cried Lady Amaranth, with a sneer which would have rivalled Sycorax.

"There is no judging how far vulgar prejudices may influence certain orders of intellect," said the Duchess of Riversford; "and there are spirits whom Fate has destined to creep through life in perpetual obscurity. Who would endeavour to light the mole, or hope to animate the frozen heart by the admonitions of reason?"

"What card does your grace recommend?" said I, piqued by her taillery.

"The queen of hearts."

"Your grace is always thinking of yourself," cried Mr. Winkwell.

"What objection has your grace to the black knave?" said I.

" That is my favourite," cried Lady Ethiop.

I took from the packet, which Lady Fuby had presented me, the knave of clubs.

" I bar personality," exclaimed an old coxcomb; " let the young adventurer have the queen of diamonds."

" That's a sort of slanderous invendo," said Lady Ethiop; " a sarcastic remark on my friend Mrs. Begum, and I am too much attached to her interest to hear her name mentioned ill-naturedly."

" To her treasures you mean," said Miss Casino. " I wish I had some of her diamonds, and she was in the infernal regions!"

" Oh, horrible!" exclaimed Lady Amaranth. " How can you put one in mind of such places?"

" Will nobody name a card for me?" said I.

" Silence!"

"Silence!" vociferated the dealer, looking at me with more insolence than I was disposed to tolerate.

A loud laugh succeeded his abrupt reproof: I was vexed, piqued, and I thought insulted; and taking my purse from my pocket, threw it on the ace of spades. The card lost, and I was a bankrupt!

Mrs. Winkwell lamented my ill-luck, and advised me to try another colour; when Mrs. Casino exclaimed—"For Heaven's sake let him alone!—Fortune does not always favour the brave, and Mr. Ainsforth's courage seems entirely exhausted already. If I had him in my school only one winter, I would teach him to bear ill-luck with a better grace."

"Yes, and it is all you would teach him!" cried Lady Parkintown. "I would inculcate more palatable precepts, and, if the doctrines of Diogenes may

be credited, more efficacious ones.— Your lessons are too dry and fastidious for so young a pupil."

"Mr. Ainsforth," interrupted Lady Amaranth, "is not accustomed to mingle in this kind of circle, and perhaps feels himself abashed by its novelty. Age will make a wonderful alteration."

"I doubt it, my lady," said I eagerly.

"Can you look in her ladyship's face, and doubt the assertion?", cried Miss Casino in a loud whisper.

Again the titter went round, when Lady Emily interrupted it with "Come, come, you begin to grow scurrilous.— Perhaps Lady Amaranth has not the tame forbearance of Mr. Ainsforth; she may not like to take the load from his shoulders, and become the butt of the company?"

"I do not comprehend your ladyship," said I, changing colour and disconcerted.

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"Silence!"

"Silence!" was again vociferated. I returned the dealer a look of ineffable contempt. Lady Parkintown whispered,

—“Bravo!” —
“You may talk to any one but Lady Emily,” cried little Casino, smothering her evident mirth at the rude admonition I had experienced.

“He had no business to interrupt the table,” said the dealer.

I was a stranger to the forms of fashionable society; and, concluding that I had acted indecorously, was silent.

Lady Amaranth now beckoned me to sit by her, and, my fair hostess being somewhat intimidated by the reproof of the dealer, I was unemployed, and accepted the invitation. “Why will you not play again?” said Lady Amaranth.

“I have no more cash about me!” said

“I will be your banker,” cried she, with a tone of languishment perfectly

ridiculous; "you shall owe me this *rouleau*;" at the same time placing fifty guineas on a card before me. I won; the stake was doubled—a second time I was successful; I ventured deeper, still talking to Lady Emily, who leaned over the back of my chair—the advantage again was mine, and again silence was commanded. I smiled, and turning to my lovely hostess, continued the conversation.

Fortune persevered in favouring me till the whole bank was mine. A solemn pause marked the consternation of the circle. I offered to pay Lady Armaranth her fifty guineas; but she said she was in haste; and, requesting that I would call on her the following day, quitted the room precipitately. The bank amounted to eight hundred pounds, and I returned to my lodgings highly pleased with the success of my enterprise.

CHAP. XXXII.

I WENT to bed—but to sleep was impossible. The idea of having grown into favour with Fortune conjured up a thousand flattering hopes, and I began to anticipate joys which to me have ever been visionary. Now, thought I, if Isabella had not been the victim of Sir Sidney's passions, with this little sum I might have looked forward to the acquirement of a splendid fortune. The recollection of Mr. Randolph's distress succeeded this idea, and I was about to devise means for discovering his retreat, when a servant, abruptly entering my apartment, delivered the following laconic epistle—

" SIR,

" As I know you are offended at my treatment of you last night at Lady Emily

Emily Delvin's, I expect you to call on me immediately for the satisfaction you merit. Therefore, as I never permit any man to be beforehand with me in a matter of punctilio, or to interfere with me in affairs of gallantry, I shall wait for you from ten till twelve this day on Claverton Down.

"Yours,

"LINBOURNE.

"N.B. I always fight with swords."

My consternation was infinite. I looked earnestly at the servant who had delivered the letter, and his countenance convinced me that he was no stranger to its contents.

"Are you Lord Linbourne's *valet de chambre?*" said I..

"Faith and I am his letter-carrier," replied the honest Hibernian, "This is the fifth of the sort that I have had the honour to deliver during the two years.

years that I have lived with him; and the devil a one went so much against the grain as the bit of a challenge which is now before you."

" Why?" said I, earnestly.

" Because you are the only man who seems inclined to take it seriously. Gentlemen who play, apply the sword as a certain specific where the purse-strings are tardy; and if they won't pull easily, a trifle of a scratch settles the dispute without bloodshed."

" I do not owe Lord Limbourne a guinea," said I.

" No matter for that," cried the *valet de chambre*, " you must fight him first, and dispute the business afterwards."

" Suppose one of us should fall?"

" Why then the debt is paid honourably," replied O'Donagan; " and upon my conscience there is sympathy between us; for either you will lose a *miserie* *triste*,

tress, or your humble servant a master, and that's the same thing, you know."

"A mistress!—I do not comprehend you.—Pray, my honest fellow, be explicit."

"Faith and I will; but you must give me time, and I will tell you a long story."

"Be brief," said I, "for time is precious."

"Why then we will defer it till after the battle."

"Begin, begin," cried I hastily.—"Whom and what do you mean?"

"Why, for the whom," replied O'Donagan, "I mean Lady Emily Delvin; and for the what, you must fight my lord before you know any thing at all about it."

I found that I only lost time in questioning my loquacious messenger, and therefore bade him return to his master with my answer, that I should not fail to attend

attend him at the hour and place appointed.

As soon as he was gone I drest myself, and proceeded to Lady Amaranth's—my debt of honour demanded the visit; and as it was the first I had ever incurred, I could not feel easy till I had discharged it. I also made a short memorandum, which I directed to Mr. Hanbury, bequeathing my newly acquired little fortune equally between Isabella and Mr. Randolph. My mind was considerably tranquillized by these proceedings, and I felt wholly indifferent as to the result of my rencontre with Lord Linbourne.

Good frequently originates in evil, and the persecutions of fate bring with them the weariness of an existence which, if perpetually happy, would shrink from annihilation. Thus every mortal pang which this "feverish being" is doomed to suffer, every dear and beloved friend or relative that is prematurely torn from

from our agonized bosoms, smooths the path of death, and only goes before us to divest the grave of more than half its horrors.

With a degree of composure new to a mind hitherto marked by an extraordinary irritability, I walked towards Lady Amaranth's lodgings, ruminating on the approaching event with the philosophy of a stoic; for, having felt the pang of disappointed affection, having found that bosom false in which I had deposited all my hopes of happiness—having experienced the torture which had been given by the cold grasp of persecution, I had no new afflictions to apprehend that could surpass those which I had already experienced. The chords of sensation were unstrung by the repeated touch of sorrow; and I looked forward to death as a pleasing slumber; to the grave as a sure asylum from the miseries of existence.

Arriving

Arriving at Lady Amaranth's lodgings, I was ushered into her breakfast room, where, though it was morning, and her ladyship just returned from the bath, I found her as highly *rouged*, and her flaxen tresses as much curled and powdered, as they had been on the preceding evening. Day-light rendered her, if possible, more hideous than she appeared by the tempered glare of an illuminated ball-room. I could scarcely believe that I was speaking to a being animated with sensation, till she addressed me with a degree of self-importance that commanded my attention.—

"So, Mr. — — — , I really forget your name."

"Ainsforth," said I gravely.

"Aye, aye, Mr. Ainsforth; so you last night made your *debut* in the fashionable world; and how do you like it?"

"Not at all, Lady Amaranth; I am weary of it already," said I; "and most

most likely in a few hours shall quit it for ever."

" We are certainly very unlike the order of people with whom you have been accustomed to vegetate," cried Lady Amaranth, presenting me a cup of chocolate, and endeavouring to look interesting.

" Very unlike, indeed!" said I sighing.

" You are fond of rural life, I presume?" continued her ladyship.

" Solitude was once my pride and my consolation. I found it the source of mental pleasure, till the storms of fate broke over me, and robbed the scene of all its attractions."

" Rather say the affections of the heart, Mr. Ainsforth."

I bowed assent, but made no answer.

" If you are fond of rustic sports, I have a small villa, not far from the metropolis, where some excellent hunters

and

and a pack of chosen hounds may contribute to your amusement, if you could suffer me to be your companion."

I was astonished at the proposal, and almost believed that she was suddenly deprived of reason.

" You are silent," continued she: " Will you accept my invitation? I am weary of the gay world, and pant for retirement; but total solitude would destroy me: I cannot bear to think; rumination preys on my shattered nerves, and overwhelms me with a lassitude which is insupportable."

I shrank from the proposal with horror—She read the marked disgust which spoke in every feature, and, after a moment's smothered pride, again renewed the conversation.

" We were in high favour with fortune last night; it was a lucky partnership for us both."

" Partner-

" Partnership!" repeated I, with evident amazement.

" Yes; you know we went halves in the stakes which won the bank from Lord Linbourne."

" I did not understand it so," said I. " Your ladyship was so kind as to lend me a *rouleau*, and I am come hither to repay it."

" If you doubt my word of honour," cried Lady Amaranth, looking through the window, with a tone of haughty superiority, " here comes a witness who cannot but remember the circumstance."

As she spoke I observed Mrs. Casino and her pretty daughter coming round the circus. There was no retreating, and I waited the result of their evidence with silent expectation.

" O you cursed devil!" exclaimed Miss Casino on entering the room, and seeing me with Lady Amaranth: " You ruined poor Linbourne last night, not only

only in fortune, but in love; for Lady Emily and he are parted for ever."

"Mr. Ainsforth and I are now settling the matter," cried Lady Amaranth: "he did not understand that we were partners in the stakes which won the bank.—Did not you conceive it so?"

"Unquestionably!" replied Mrs. Casino.

"Certainly!" added her pretty daughter.

Lady Fubsy and Mrs. Winkwell now joined the trio, and the weight of the former caused the scale to preponderate in favour of the junto. Though the even hand of justice would have given me the victory.

"I cannot dispute such powerful evidence," said I, taking out my pocket-book, and presenting her notes to the amount of four hundred and fifty pounds. She received them with unblushing

avidity, and laying them on the breakfast table, inquired whether I had seen or heard from Lord Linbourne.

I replied that I was then going to meet him.

" You have made a fine *fracas!* " said Lady Fubsy. " The word *Silence*, so emphatically repeated, was prompted by more sensations than one; for people do not hesitate to say that Lord Linbourne is the partner of my friend Lady Emily Delvin in other concerns beside her faro bank."

" Every body knows that her ladyship is near playing her last stake," cried Mrs. Casino.

" Yes," continued Lady Amaranth; " even her king of hearts, which has so long been her favourite, has at last deserted her."

" She is now fond of diamonds," said Mrs. Casino.

" Because

"Because she has gone through all the clubs till they are weary of her," cried the good-natured Lady Fubsy.

"And hearts are never prosperous under her ladyship's direction," added the fair Winkwell.

At this moment Lady Emily entered the room; the whole circle greeted her with smiles of cordiality. My contempt was not to be concealed; and, without speaking another syllable, I quitted the house, shocked and ashamed, as I reflected on the depravity of that sex which was formed to be the brightest ornament of the creation.

The specimen which I had already seen of exalted friendship and modern wit, scarcely left a wish in my bosom for a farther intercourse with the fashionable world. The traveller who encounters the highway robber—the libertine who wastes his life and fortune with the avowed wanton, is less exposed to peril

than the dupe who commits himself to the destructive vortex of a faro table ; where beauty is held up as a lure to enthrall the senses, while avarice and fraud take advantage of its fascinations, and every moral virtue trembles at its triumphs.

I returned to my lodgings. Colonel Aubrey was still sleeping, having passed a restless night. I took his sword — and, wrapping myself in my surtout the better to conceal it, flew with all possible haste to the place of appointment.

CHAP. XXXIII.

ASCENDING the hill towards Claverton Down, I met a carriage with the blinds nearly drawn; concluding that Lord Linbourne had waited till his patience was exhausted, and was returning to seek after me, in order to prevent any farther delay, I stopped the post-boy.—The blind was raised, when to my infinite surprise, I beheld Sir Sidney Aubrey and Isabella.

I muffled my face in my surtout, and endeavoured to escape: but my cousin had caught a glimpse of my features before I was aware of it, and, instantly leaping from the chaise, caught hold of my arm and detained me. My embarrassment could not be concealed; Isabella's penetrating eyes augmented my chagrin, and I had not power to utter a syllable.

Sir Sidney demanded to know the cause of my strange appearance; a furtout in the month of August, and one arm wholly concealed, excited his curiosity. He snatched my hand, and shaking it heartily, exclaimed, "By Heavens! my worthy cousin, you are a singular being! What new project do you meditate—an intrigue, or a duel?"

A thousand sensations crowded about my heart: I would joyfully have rushed upon Lord Linbourne's sword, and buried its point in my palpitating bosom: Sir Sidney's easy familiarity was so blended with good-nature, and Isabella's solicitude appeared so like returning attention, that I almost felt inclined to forgive them.

"You must go with us to the inn," said my cousin.

"Are you travelling alone?" inquired I, dreading to hear a confirmation of my fears.

Isabella

Isabella blushed; Sir Sidney smiled; but neither answered my question.

"I am in haste," said I, "you shall see me again in a couple of hours at farthest. I am going to meet a friend upon business which will not detain me long,"

My voice was tremulous, my countenance confused; Isabella looked earnestly at me; "Walsingham," cried she, "you give us but a cold reception!"

My situation was peculiarly distressing; I thought that the tone of Isabella's voice had something in it more than usually tender; all my former sorrows rushed across my brain; I was agitated, afflicted, vanquished.

"Return with us to the hotel only for five minutes," repeated Sir Sidney, "and you shall then be at liberty."

Isabella conjured me, with such impressive kindness, to comply, that I had not power to disobey her. I accompa-

nied them to the York-House Hotel, where I wrote the following note to Lord Linbourne:—

“ MY LORD,

“ Our meeting must be deferred till this evening: I have some business of importance to settle, which will be completed by seven o'clock—at eight you will find me near the first mile-stone on Claverton Down.

“ Yours,

“ W. A.”

A waiter took the note to Lord Linbourne. He met him on the North Parade, and an immediate answer was returned, written with a pencil on a scrap of paper, merely saying, “ I shall expect you.”

I now sent to let Colonel Aubrey know of Sir Sidney's arrival, and in a few minutes he was with us. I avoided all

all kind of conversation with Isabella, but I could not wholly decline seeing her, without an *eclaircissement*, which would have involved her in eternal disgrace. What we wish, we are too apt to believe, and I was more than half inclined to credit Sir Sidney's assertion, that Isabella was still innocent. There was a delicate propriety in her words; a beautiful timidity in her looks; a mild and modest dignity in every action, which bore marks of that purity of mind which is not to be awed by the opinions of the world, nor contaminated by the force of pernicious example.

On my first entering the hotel, I had left my great coat and sword in an adjoining apartment. As soon as dinner was finished, Isabella quitted the room, to choose some articles of dress which were brought for her inspection. Colonel Aubrey, availing himself of her absence, began to question Sir Sidney on the

propriety of their journey. "Does Lady Aubrey know of this excursion?" said he.

"She does, and will shortly follow us," was the answer.

"Is it your intention to marry Miss Hanbury?" was the second question.

"No," replied Sir Sidney, gravely.

"To debauch her?"

"Certainly not," answered my cousin.

"You must mean to do the one or the other," cried Colonel Aubrey, somewhat hastily.

"Neither, upon my honour," replied Sir Sidney, placing his hand upon his heart, and sighing deeply.

I thought there was an equivocal meaning in his words, which did not strike Colonel Aubrey; for he seemed to insinuate that he could not mean to do that which was previously accomplished.

"Perhaps you are already married?" was the question which followed.

My

My cousin smiled. His journey to Bath, alone with Isabella, confirmed the idea; and I considered my situation as hopeless.

"Well," continued Colonel Aubrey, "I shall be sorry to find that you make a fool of the girl, because she is amiable and lovely—"

"As an angel!" exclaimed I, "and the monster who would pollute so pure a bosom, must have the depravity of a villain."

"Agreed," said Sir Sidney.

I felt my breast glow with returning hope. Colonel Aubrey mused, with something so unbelieving in his countenance, that I again felt the trembler fear stealing to my heart;—when he started from his reverie, exclaiming, "By Heavens! she is playing a hazardous game, Sir Sidney; for while you deceive her by specious attentions, she is hourly losing her influence over the affections of Walsingham."

My cousin seemed to exult in this intelligence. Colonel Aubrey continued:

" Mr. Ainsforth is the favoured lover of Lady Emily Delvin: I have heard of nothing else in every house that I have entered this morning. His attentions at her ball last night give rise to the report, and I wish him joy with all my soul; for Lady Emily's jointure is two thousand pounds *per annum*, with expectancies, at the death of a near relation, which will nearly treble that sum."

" Ridiculous!" exclaimed Sir Sidney: " Is it true, Walsingham?" continued he seriously.

" This is the first I have heard of it," answered I. " But even were it true, I cannot allow you, of all men living, the right to question me."

" Now I can account for your disguise this morning," cried my cousin: " your confusion at our first meeting, and your hesitation to return with us.

I thought

I thought you were equipped for some important expedition."

"A very important one indeed!" answered I.

"To meet Lady Emily Delvin? Is she a woman of such fastidious manners that the busy world is not permitted to behold her transactions? Is a disguise absolutely necessary to gain admittance beneath the roof of your enamorata?"

"I do not deny that the business of this morning required more than common secrecy," said I.

"Already an adept in the mysteries of intrigue!" continued Sir Sidney.
"You have made a distinguished *debut*, and your progress has been rapid!"

"As your thoughts," said I.

"And changeable,"—cried he—

"As your opinions."

Sir Sidney seemed piqued at my laconic answers. "I'll see this fair enchantress," continued he, rising from table,

table, and walking hastily about the room. Again he resumed his seat, and filling his glass, inquired, "Pray, my gallant cousin, what is this Lady Emily Delvin?"

"A woman," answered I.

"Pshaw!" cried he peevishly; "I mean what sort of woman?"

"Handsome, lively, and rich," replied I. "Young enough to make hearts ache, and too old to be the dupe of her own."

I was somewhat pleased at the idea of vexing Sir Sidney; and I knew, that to excite his curiosity and not to gratify it, was to render him completely wretched. I had another powerful reason for my ambiguous answers: the hope that Isabella might be roused to that jealousy, which would gratify my self-love, and humble my exulting rival.

"Lady Emily is a divinity!" continued I, with a degree of animation which

which my agitated heart could scarcely assume ; “ and I am not ashamed to confess my idolatry of such perfection !”

“ I have heard my mother talk of her, as a compound of affectation and folly,” cried Sir Sidney. “ At all events I will see her before I sleep, and you shall then know my decided opinion. If she is worthy of notice, I shall take her myself : she will do well enough to trifle away an hour with, when I am not engaged with a more interesting object.”

“ Suppose I dispute the prize,” said I sternly.

“ O ! not with *me*, Walsingham ! You will not attempt to snatch the laurel from the brow of such a rival ; for, since the day of Lady Emily’s first *entrée* in the world of gallantry, she has never had such a lover as Sidney Aubrey.”

“ In one respect you are unequalled,” said I ; “ for, if inordinate vanity can claim

claim the right of pre-eminence, your superiority is indisputable."

My cousin looked serious. I found that I had stung him deeply, and my triumph was gratifying in the extreme.

"Never fear, Walsingham," cried Colonel Aubrey, "you have yet Miss Hanbury's affections to console you; and she is worth a thousand Lady Emily's. Let Sir Sidney take the titled moppet, while you repose your future hopes on the bosom of unsophisticated beauty."

Sir Sidney turned pale; he attempted to speak, but could not articulate a syllable. Colonel Aubrey replenished his glass, and a silence of some moments followed. For once, thought I, the victory is mine! Thou art not destined to triumph eternally! Be it now thy turn to feel one pang, for all the agonies that thou hast made me suffer.

CHAP. XXXIV.

THE hour drew near in which I was destined to quit Isabella; perhaps, to quit her for ever, at the very moment when returning hope dawned on the dark prospect, which my adverse fate had hitherto presented. I longed to bid her an eternal farewell; to pour out my whole soul in the language of affection; and to avow, that my latest breath should pronounce her the exclusive object of my idolatry. While I was ruminating on the cruelty of my destiny, a small *billet* was delivered by the waiter. I hastily opened it, and to my infinite consternation read the following lines from Lady Amaranth:

“ I have seen Lord Linbourne. He
“ has hinted suspicions that we won his
“ bank

“ bank unfairly. I am ready to refund
“ my share of the money, if you have no
“ objection to follow my example ; and
“ I will venture to assert, that such a
“ step will not only satisfy his lordship,
“ but put a fortunate period to the
“ whole transaction. He waits at my
“ lodgings for your answer.

“ Yours, &c. &c.”

“ Infamous collusion!” exclaimed I,
rising abruptly from table. I had scarce-
ly uttered the words, when Isabella en-
tered the room with my great coat, and
Colonel Aubrey’s sword.

“ What do you think of this disguise
for a knight-errant?” said she, laughing;
“ this is Walsingham’s summer walking
dress—!”

“ The sword is mine!” said Colonel
Aubrey, with evident astonishment.

The matter had gone too far to be
concealed any longer; I therefore
thought

thought it both prudent and candid to inform Colonel Aubrey of my appointment with Lord Linbourne; and also to request that he would be my second.

"Let me investigate the matter," said he.

"It can only be investigated by the points of our swords," said I. "The whole of the transaction is marked with infamy;—a plot deeply laid, and impudently put in practice by a set of females, who disgrace the rank they hold in society; who have long deserved the chastisement of the laws, and the detestation of every honourable mind."

"Such scandalous proceedings merit public exposure," cried Sir Sidney; "and, though Walsingham will scarcely allow me the name of friend, I will not stand tamely looking on while he is assassinated by a sharper. I will attend you to Claverton Down."

"He

“ He shall not stir a step,” cried Colonel Aubrey, starting from his seat, and taking his hat ;—“ I will settle the business without either bloodshed or disgrace to Walsingham. An old soldier is no stranger to the treachery of a dastardly enemy, and if I do not blow up the mine which guards this citadel of iniquity, let me be broke for cowardice, and condemned, for the rest of my life, to associate with scoundrels !”

“ Not on my account, for Heaven’s sake !” said I. “ Let me settle the matter with Lord Linbourne ; I do not fear his sword, or doubt the justice of my cause. I cannot refuse to fight him, but with dishonour to myself.”

“ In a cause that would enhance your reputation, I would be your second, knee-deep in blood,” cried Colonel Aubrey ; “ but I will not suffer knaves and gamblers to avail themselves of those laws,

laws, which were only invented by men of honour, for the defence of virtue.” As he concluded these words, he snatched up his sword, and darted out of the room. I was instantly following, when Sir Sidney and Isabella rushed towards the door, and detained me.

“ Walsingham, you stir not,” cried my cousin, turning the key, and putting it in his pocket. Isabella, bursting into tears, conjured me to be calm: “ Let Colonel Aubrey arrange the business,” said she; “ you are too recently initiated in the follies of fashionable life to know their antidotes. In the hands of a veteran soldier, and a man of invincible courage, your reputation will be safe from every shadow of dishonour.”

“ He must not fight Lord Linbourne,” said I.

“ Lord Linbourne will not put him to the trial,” cried Sir Sidney; “ a duel is not the event which he meditates, believe

lieve me. Lady Amaranth's note elucidates his motives; and you are the dupe of their practised machinations."

As he spoke, a gentle tap at the door arrested our attention, and a feeble voice entreated me to open it. Sir Sidney turned as pale as ashes; Isabella looked earnestly at him; he drew the key from his pocket, and, in a moment, Lady Emily Delvin entered the apartment. On seeing that I had companions, she started back, and with a well-feigned timidity made some awkward apologies for her intrusion: yet her ladyship did not retire; her confusion in a moment vanished; she entered the room without the faintest tint of a retiring blush, and throwing herself into a chair, fixed her eyes on Isabella.

"Mr. Ainsforth," said Lady Emily with affected formality, "I request the honour of speaking to you *alone*. The business which urges this indecorous visit,

visit, is of importance that will not admit of a moment's procrastination."

Sir Sidney bowed and retired; Isabella followed: as soon as the door was shut, Lady Emily rose, and advancing towards me, exclaimed with a smile of reproach, "Are you not a pretty sort of a creature?"

I did not comprehend her question.

" You do not seem sensible of the mischief you have occasioned," said she, assuming a more serious tone and manner. " The vanity of universal conquest, precludes the compunction of individual injury."

" I am sorry that my conduct towards your ladyship has been so grossly misconstrued," said I.

" Why sorry?" inquired Lady Emily, evidently mortified. " Is it a matter of disgrace to fix the attentions of a woman, who is not wholly destitute of attractions?"

I bowed

I bowed slightly, but made no answer. Doubly piqued by my coldness, and almost angry at my taciturnity, she continued: "It may be of little consequence to you, but to me it is of infinite importance. The reputation of a woman of rank is too rare a jewel to be trifled with. The affections of the heart deserve a more liberal return than the mere outward attentions of gallantry. Lord Linbourne's jealousy has blazoned my weakness, and it only remains for you, to do me justice."

I was still mute with consternation:—she proceeded:—

"I must positively quit Bath. This unlucky *fracas* will overwhelm me with scandal. Lord Linbourne will be glad to avail himself of my indiscreet attentions towards you; and Mrs. Winkwell will triumph over that heart, which she has long sought, in vain, to vanquish."

"I thought

"I thought you called her your friend!—Was she not your guest, Lady Emily?" said I gravely.

"Those are the mere outward semblances of friendship; every woman calls herself my friend, who visits at my house, eats at my table, prys into my secret thoughts, and gives me impertinent admonition," replied Lady Emily:—"but women of the world are not influenced by such counsellors,—neither are they desirous that we should be; for, to adopt the sober precepts which they affect to inculcate, would be to banish them from our society for ever. But this is not the purpose of my visit:—I came not hither to expose the frivolity of modern friendship, but to try the sincerity of one, who was not schooled in the circles of dissimulation. Are you my friend?"

"Certainly not," said I abruptly.

VOL. II.

H

"Why

"Why do you disclaim the title?" cried Lady Emily.

"Because I have not known you long enough to judge how far you deserve my good opinion. It would be easier to be your lover than your friend."

She smiled: her personal vanity was flattered at the expence of her moral virtues, and she did not lament the sacrifice.

"What is your idea of friendship?" said Lady Emily, sighing; "and how is it possible to obtain your good opinion? I confess that I am ambitious of acquiring what you seem determined to withhold, merely to prove that my power is irresistible."

"Then I will tell you candidly," said I, "upon condition that you will suffer me immediately to leave you: an affair of consequence demands that I should cease trifling; therefore you must forgive my brevity."

The

The inclination of her head implied obedience.

"Friendship," said I, "is one of the purest passions of the human mind! It braves the perils of adversity, and knows no delight equal to that of proving its sincerity. It confesses no superiority of rank; it will not bear inequality of fortune."

"What are its visible *traits*?" interrupted Lady Emily; "for, by its secret sensations, I shall never learn to know it."

"So much the worse!" said I. "The outward marks of friendship are easily described. It courts us not in the sunny hours of pleasure and prosperity, but, when the storms of fate gather round the child of sorrow, rushes forward to its aid, participates in every grief, and throws the gifts of fortune into the lap of the desponding mourner. It comes not to console affliction dressed

in the plausible, but insulting tears of pity ; it does not paint the anguish of regret in frothy sounds or vaunted commiseration—its actions are its vouchers, not its words ; it does not probe the wounded heart, and yet refuse to meliorate its sufferings."

At this moment Lady Amaranth's carriage stopped at the door. I rushed out of the room, and flew to inquire the cause of her visit.

A presentiment of some new misfortune rushed through my heart, and it did not deceive me. A rencontre had taken place between Colonel Aubrey and Lord Linbourne, which had left the latter dangerously wounded at Lady Amaranth's lodgings.

CHAP. XXXV.

I FOUND Lord Linbourne in the hands of his surgeon, who pronounced the wound to be extremely alarming. Colonel Aubrey's sword had penetrated his right side, and the effusion of blood had totally deprived him of recollection.

In the adjoining apartment the whole phalanx of folly had assembled : I inquired after Colonel Aubrey ; they knew nothing about him. O'Donagan was summoned to declare how the rencontre had happened ; for he was the only person present, beside the combatants, and he gave the following description :

" My Lord and my Lady Amaranth were settling their partnership in the bank, which the young jontleman got hould on last night at my Lady Del-

vin's. The devil burn the cards ! for they are his own tallies," cried O'Donagan, wiping his eyes. " And so then," continued he, " in comes the colonel, and, without spaking a word, he axes my lord very genteelly, how he came to be such a knave as to say that the young jontleman had chated him. So then my lady takes herself off, and my lord takes up his bit of steel, which lay very convaniently upon the table. So then—Och ! let me recollect—how was it then?—Why, my lord said that Lady Amaranth infisted on having back her money ; for that she saw Mrs. Casino making signs to the young jontleman, and it was not fair to play *all the game* with a friend, d'ye see. Then the colonel called them a pack of chates all together, and my lord drew his sword, and to it they went, like tame tigers, till down comes one, and away marches the other with all the honours of war."

" What

" What were you doing all the while?" said I eagerly.

" Looking on, to watch that there was no harm done," replied O'Donagan; " for I have seen my lord, many a good time, play at fighting in jest; and, as that is the way now-a-days, the devil burn me if I tought that he would ever be in arrest. But this turn he got hould of a tough bit of a Tartar, who was not to be fubbed off with a sham: so he got it;—and that's all I know of the matter."

" Lady Amaranth and Lord Linbourne joint proprietors of the bank!" said I with astonishment. " What is your opinion of this business?" addressing Mrs. Winkwell.

" I think it shocking and scandalous!" replied she, " though they are my friends; and whatever my public conduct towards them may be, rest assured that I heartily despise their de-

H 4 ceptions.

ceptions. I know their hearts; they are sordid, trifling, and deceitful: viciously prodigal in pursuit of selfish gratifications, and parsimonious even to meanness, where a fellow-creature depends on their humanity."

"With such sentiments, why do you make them your associates?" said I; "Are you fond of gaming?"

"O! quite the reverse," exclaimed Mrs. Winkwell; "I seldom play. But do you imagine that these people open their houses merely for their gambling propensities? Are you yet to learn that they are the most convenient seminaries for every species of dissipation? that, under their roofs, a husband's happiness, and a wife's reputation, are as often staked as the *rouleaus* on their tables?"

I was preparing to answer, when Lady Ethiop exclaimed, "Well! thank God! Linbourne's exit will be no great loss; for

for he has nearly ruined himself, and would most likely have ended his days a miserable exile!"

" 'Tis a good thing for me," said Mrs. Casino, smiling.

" My mamma owes him five hundred," added her sprightly epitome; " and death pays all debts of honour, you know."

I shuddered:—the whole circle laughed.

" Heavens! I hope he will live," cried Lady Fuby; " for he borrowed fifty of me only this morning. Indeed he told me it was to lend Lady Emily; but her distress is nothing to me: I'll go and make him give me security on his estate."

" That has long since been mortgaged," said Mrs. Casino. " Lord Lambert can give you an account of the business."

"*Lady* Lambert you mean," said *Lady Ethiop*; "though the purity of her flame will not bear the breath of caluny."

"Nay, *Lady Ethiop*," retorted the angry *Thais*, "you shared one thousand last winter towards your annual purse for the support of your establishment; and it was thought a very fortunate hit, considering the run of ill-luck which had attended your pecuniary labours, and the sudden death of your last *steve*."

"Ridiculous coquet!" muttered *Lady Ethiop*.

Miss Casino giggled.

"Well, I shall go and dun him," cried *Lady Fubsy*.

She was flying, if a tortoise may be supposed to fly, towards the chamber-door, when she was interrupted by the surgeon. "You cannot see his lordship," said he; "he is incapable of speaking."

"But

" But I suppose he can *hear!*" vociferated her ladyship.

" I trust not," said little Casino; " for the amiable comments of his kind friends would prevent his ever crediting that sense in future. Poor Linbourne! I believe that I am the only being in the whole circle who will be sorry for his departure."

" Because you know him the least," cried Lady Ethiop. " He has had his day, and must make room for more profitable objects. He has lately haunted our faro-table, like the very spectre of his departed prosperity, perpetually reminding one of his folly, and evincing the instability of human happiness: I declare I am always nervous after I have seen him at my bank."

" You should at least allow him the merit of sympathy," said Miss Casino; " for I believe his sensations are exactly similar."

"It is very fortunate that he is not married," cried Mr. Winkwell; "that indeed *would* have been a calamity."

"You speak like a man of experience," interrupted Lord Powderwood; "and I make no doubt but you feel what you express; though Mrs. Winkwell will not thank you for the remark."

"You are a perfect cynic," exclaimed Miss Casino. "Why do you not marry, and convince yourself how much you are mistaken in your ideas of conjugal felicity?"

"Can I be mistaken with such examples before me?" cried his lordship. "For my own part, I see but one object to whom I feel pleasure in offering my idolatry!"

It was rather unfortunate that a mirror at this moment caught his lordship's attention, and the idol whom he named was but too visible to the disappointed circle.

circle. After adjusting a love-lock, which nearly covered his right eye-brow, he sighed, “ Alas, poor Linbourne ! he had none of those soft and polished graces which stamp the finer clay of nobility ! He was quite a rude sample of Hibernian ferocity :—but the women like such savages ; and to be perfectly *comme il faut* in the lists of modern gallantry, a man should eat a tiger, or burn a citadel with all the *sang froid* of a complete Vandal. Guy Earl of Warwick would have been wonderfully sought after by the love-inspiring phalanx of the present day. He slew a black calf—did he not, Lady Ethiop ?”

“ I thought it had been a dun cow,” said Miss Casino. “ What say you, Lady Fubsy ?”

“ How should I know ?” cried her ladyship, rather angrily.

“ Nay,

"Nay, you must pardon me," replied Miss Casino; "for your ladyship's figure suggested the idea."

A burst of laughter echoed through the room.

"Come, come, this is mixing the gall of severity with the light ether of wit," said Mrs. Winkwell; "though I confess," said she, addressing me in a low whisper, "that last winter at the opera Lady Fubsy, with her everlasting wreath, always put me in mind of the ancients, who, when they sacrificed a white cow, never failed to dress its brows with a garland of roses."

As she was speaking, Lord Linbourne groaned deeply; it was like the agonizing sigh of a departing spirit!—I started, and rose abruptly from my seat:—a momentary pause succeeded.

"How awful is this silence!" cried Lady Fubsy, moving majestically towards the looking-glass, and placing herself

herself in a dramatic attitude. Miss Casino again began to titter. Lord Powderwood smothered his mirth with a perfumed handkerchief: the pretty Winkwell laughed aloud; and Lady Amaranth, at the same instant entering the drawing-room, made a flaw in her left cheek, which greatly added to the entertainment of the group; yet her ladyship, wholly unconscious of the accident, drawled out with disgusting indifference—"Is Linbourne dead?"

The clatter became general, till the surgeon interfered, and entreated them to recollect, that their friend was at that moment, most probably, expiring in the adjoining apartment.

"Heavens!" exclaimed Lady Amaranth, "he cannot die in my chamber: you must remove him instantly; I would not have a frightful corpse under the roof with me for all the universe. The bare idea makes me ready to faint with horror!—

horror!—I hate the very thoughts of dying: he must be conveyed to his lodgings, and that immediately."

"Instant death would be the consequence!" replied the surgeon.

"I cannot help that," said Lady Amaranth. "It is fitter that he should die, than that I should be terrified out of my senses."

I could bear their unfeeling conduct no longer; but, rushing out of the room abruptly, hastened home in search of Colonel Aubrey.

He had quitted Bath more than an hour, without saying to what part of England he was going. The surgeon's unfavourable report had occasioned his precipitate ~~retreat~~, and a wish to avoid my acknowledgments induced him to keep his journey a secret. My distress was infinite. The dilemma in which I had involved so kind, so generous a friend; the fatal consequences which seemed

seemed rapidly approaching, and the precarious state of Colonel Aubrey's health, united to perplex me. I lamented, with undescribable anguish, the moment when I suffered him to interfere, and reproached myself for revealing what had passed respecting Lord Linbourne. But repentance came too tardily when mischief was triumphant; and the torture of my mind was doubly acute, while recollection bade me fear that it was irremediable.

I passed an evening of the most painful solicitude; Lord Linbourne's fever increased every hour, and before midnight he became delirious. This intelligence awoke a thousand new and dreadful apprehensions for the safety of Colonel Aubrey; and I was not so completely benumbed by the torpidity of a fashionable atmosphere as to rest entirely at ease under the conviction of having endangered

dangered the life of a fellow-creature. I sent several messages to the surgeon who attended Lord Linbourne, for I had no other source of intelligence, the whole phalanx being engaged at Mrs. Casino's ball; the answers were alarming; and my distress almost overwhelmed me.

At midnight I went in search of Isabella and Sir Sidney, who had both received cards from Mrs. Casino: on inquiring at the York Hotel I found that they had accepted the invitation: I shuddered at their conduct, particularly when the waiter added that Lady Emily Delvin had called for them in her carriage. I could scarcely believe the assertion; I had yet to learn the manners and opinions of the new world—for such to me was that race of mortals who, living only for themselves, looked with an eye of apathy on all the breathing world around them.

I was

I was completely bewildered; how to proceed, or what road to take in search of Colonel Aubrey I knew not. The crisis was momentous; Lord Linbourne was approaching the dark verge of dissolution, "with all his imperfections on his head;" and the dearest friend of my heart, by his death, was menaced with the dreadful alternative of exile or a public trial. I cursed the hour when my evil genius directed my unguarded footsteps to the paths of dissipation.— The whole night passed in inquiries, and before dawn-light, I received intelligence that Lord Linbourne's situation was hopeless. I flew to Sir Sidney's lodgings, from whence I dispatched a short note expressive of my fears, and proposing that we should immediately set out by different roads, in search of Colonel Aubrey. But how shall I describe my consternation, when the servant brought back a verbal message, that Sir Sidney

Sidney had, soon after midnight, quitted Bath with Lady Emily Delvin, and that Miss Hanbury had also departed, but with whom and for what purpose remained a profound secret.

Perplexed, distracted, and weary of the scene before me, I engaged a place in the stage-coach, and early in the morning set out for London. My inclinations knew no choice; my mind, fatigued by perpetual anxiety, seemed wholly enervated: yet I lamented the hour when I strayed from the sequestered vale of life, where the rank weeds of vice and folly are crushed by the sober hand of reason and philanthropy; where honesty is the safeguard of innocence, and man remains the friend of man, because he knows not the refinement of duplicity.

Once more, Rosanna, destined to journey onward through the perilous wilderness of misfortune, I almost tremble while

while I make you my companion. I shall lead you amid dangers; you will meet many assailants, many a weary and persecuted traveller: few will be the flowers that will decorate your path, and those will either be wrested from you by persecution, or withered in the bud by the cold touch of apathy and pride. Yet, pure and gentle associate! we will wander together; the lesson which experience enables me to inculcate will serve as your future safeguard; and the pang which memory inflicts will, from time to time, receive the consolation of sympathy, the graceful sigh of a feeling and unsophisticated bosom.

CHAP. XXXVI.

ON my arrival in London, I stopped at an hotel at the west end of the town, where, it being then near midnight, I engaged a small apartment, and, after a short supper, retired to rest. My fortitude was nearly exhausted by excess of ruminatioп; and my mind began to sicken with disgust, while I reflected on the events which had pressed rapidly forward, since my departure from Glen-owen. The weight of mortal calamities rarely overpowers the soul, when intervals of hope and consolation allow time for reason to surmount them ; but continual sorrow undermines the foundation of every bulwark which human imagination can build; and as the per-

petual wave diminishes the sandy shore, hourly encroaches, till resistance is vain, and the imperious gulph overwhelms every object that opposes.

A stranger in the vast and busy metropolis, scarcely half initiated in the customs of the world, I seemed as much alone as though I had been placed on the highest of my native mountains. The prospect of society presented no guide to lead me through the perilous maze of life; and the being whose heart experiences no glowing congeniality of sentiment, who knows not the sacred sympathy of friendship, finds an eternal solitude, wherever he is doomed to wander. I had little inclination to explore the arcana of refinement; the manners of the fashionable world were ill-suited to the temper of my mind; and the conduct of my Bath associates only augmented the disgust which was almost inherent to my nature.

The

The events of the last month appeared like illusion. Isabella's journey from Glenowen—her attachment to Sir Sidney Aubrey—his repeated and solemn asseverations respecting her innocence—his elopement with the vain and trifling Lady Emily—and Lord Linbourne's precarious situation—absorbed my mind in a gloomy reverie till I was roused by a scuffle in the adjoining chamber. I listened, and heard a warm alteration: the expressions, “Hold him fast”—“He shall not escape”—“Villains, do you mean to murder me?” convinced my mind that some horrible outrage was meditated. I tried the door—it was bolted—I wrenched it open, and, by the glimmering light of a lamp which was burning on the hearth, I perceived a decent looking man, half dressed, forcibly held by two ruffians, who were dragging him along the floor towards a private staircase.

“For

"For humanity's sake interpose, or these rascals will strangle me," said the stranger: his voice was scarcely articulate, owing to his having resisted the grasp of his assailants till his strength was exhausted. The fibres of my heart quivered with that emotion which never failed to wring them when I beheld a weaker object in the power of a stronger. To aid the wretch who was sinking beneath the stroke of inhumanity was natural; to resist unmerited persecution, was one of those impulses which nature had from my infancy implanted in my breast. It was the first sensation I had been taught to experience, and will never fail to predominate over every selfish feeling, till the last throb of vitality expires within my bosom.

Without waiting to investigate the origin of this extraordinary outrage, with one blow I laid the most powerful of the two at my feet; his head fell on

the marble hearth, and he was rendered totally insensible. His cruel but dastardly confederate threw up the fash and loudly called the watch ; the object of their persecution escaped, and, in a few moments, I was made a prisoner.

Safely lodged in the watch-house, I now discovered that the stranger whom I had liberated had been arrested for the sum of five thousand pounds; that the bailiff's skull was fractured by his fall, and that there appeared some alarming symptoms, which would require my commitment to the county prison, as soon as I could be taken before a magistrate for that purpose.

I had scarcely been in the den of Erebus five minutes, when a group of watchmen brought in a new prize. Their captive was a young man of fashionable appearance, intoxicated almost to insensibility, with his hair hanging round his shoulders,

shoulders, and his face streaming with blood.

"Who have we here?" stammered the constable of the night, "and how comes it that he is in this suspicious pickle? Let me see," continued the half-dozing scavenger of the law; "do I know his face? Is he an old offender?"

"Sperr your glass-blinkers, old grizzle-pate," cried the inebriated prisoner, "and look steadily while I dazzle your optics with a brace of shinners."

"Impudent rogue!" exclaimed the man of peace; "if you don't mend your manners you shall be put in the black cellar. I shan't suffer the dignity of the long-robe to be insulted with impunity."

"Look'ye, old star-gazer," interrupted the prisoner, "I know a thing or two; you can't humbug me with your canting morality.—I'm up to all your quizzing, my dainty; and if you don't

let me see day-light before I can count ten, I'll nab your old sconce for you—so here's to begin." "Hold him! hold the rascal!" vociferated the man in office; I know him; he's a notorious vagabond—handcuff the saucy varlet!" "Not till I have winged this bat of antiquity," cried the young man, at the same moment snatching a staff from his feeble guard, and aiming it at the throne of equity. "Hold, hold your hand," said I, seizing his uplifted arm, which was almost powerless owing to his inebriety—"Would you oppose your strength against age and debility? The contest would make you blush when returning reason enables you to reflect on its inequality."

"Sir, you're an honest fellow!" stammered the young hero of the night; "and I shall be proud to fight your battles,

tles, when I have dished the constable; but he must be done over before my honour will be satisfied; for I have long had an inclination to distinguish myself in the field of warfare, and being armed with the law on my side, cannot possibly think of relinquishing the contest."

" You see," said I, addressing the venerable circle, " this young man is extremely intoxicated, and wholly unconscious of what he is doing—Let him have his liberty, and depend on his generosity."

" O d—me ! I take you," cried the prisoner, pressing his finger on the side of his bleeding nose, and with the other hand presenting them half a score of guineas—" Depend on my generosity, and let me go."

The constable of the night, making a long neck to examine the bribe, and putting on his spectacles with most consequential gravity, replied, " Egad ! I

believe I am mistaken! this is not the person I thought it was—why, 'tis my lord! I now recollect his face; we will talk the matter over, and try to settle things amicably; I am for peace and good-fellowship, and hate bloodshed as much as I love justice! What indiscretion has his lordship committed?—some youthful frolic, I dare be sworn."

" Why, he knocked down a waiter, and threw an old woman out of the window," cried one of the watchmen.

" Well! and I suppose the waiter was a saucy varlet, and the old woman's time was come—Is there any thing of more consequence against his lordship?"

" Yes, he broke my head with my lantern, and beat in the horn on one side," cried a second watchman.

" Broke your lantern with your head? well, my lord must buy you a new horn, and all will be right again."

" It was my head—"

" Well,

" Well, your head and your horn—
it's all one.—A lord can very well pay
for both; nothing more common. Be
satisfied, and go your ways: the wisest
may be mistaken—I was mistaken."

" That's no rule," cried the watch-
man, still holding up his shattered lantern.
" Why, you made young Cinnamon,
the grocer, of Shug-lane, pay twenty
pound after keeping him two days in
Bridewell, only for kicking up a bit of a
dust at the weekly hop."

" Quite a different case—the rogue
was an old offender, and a menial subject,
fit to make an example of; people of
high stations won't do for examples."

" I don't see why a lord should knock
down an honest man, because he is not
his equal," muttered the discontented
watchman.

" Lords and honest men are often
very different things," replied the dis-

penser of justice; " therefore I will hear no more grumbling: my lord is sensible of his fault, I am satisfied, and that's sufficient."

" D—n me if I'm sensible of any thing," cried the young peer: " so touch the gold drops—divide them among you—and I'll send my surgeon to mend the old woman's leg in the morning."

So saying, the gate was opened, and the valiant champion sallied forth in search of new adventures.

CHAP. XXXVII.

EVERY thing being once more quiet, I took my seat in an obscure corner, and began to examine the variety of wretchedness around me. Every countenance exhibited marks of guilt or despondency; every tongue uttered either a prayer for liberty, or an execration, which proclaimed the most hardened depravity. Near my feet, on the ground, sat a female, whose features interested me, and whose manner excited my curiosity. She appeared to be about six-and-twenty years of age; her form was beautifully proportioned, but her face was impressed with the lines of premature decay, such as affliction traces, before the hand of Time sets its seal on the fragile works of Nature. I gazed on her with more than ordinary attention; her

downcast eyes dropped frequent tears upon her bosom ; her dishevelled hair half veiled her cheek, where an artificial bloom served to contrast the pale and quivering lip, from which no murmur of complaint proceeded.

In contemplating this daughter of affliction, I almost lost the sense of my own situation. I put forth my hand to raise her ; she sighed, and burst into an agony of tears. Every vein in my full heart throbbed while I beheld her. She wore a black domino, and a small hat adorned with rose-coloured feathers : every other part of her dress displayed the gaudy trappings of meretricious allurement. I sighed, when I considered her as one of those ill-fated beings, who become the votaries of vice, before their minds are fortified by the energies of reason.

I inquired the cause of her confinement. She informed me, in broken English,

English, that, returning from the masquerade, she had been robbed by one of the guardians of the night, who, on her charging him with the theft, accused her of walking the streets at an unseasonable hour, and delivering her over to one of his comrades, she was brought by force to the place where I found her. There was an artless sorrow in her tone, and a simplicity in her manner, that poured conviction into my heart.

"Is there no possibility of obtaining your release?" said I.

"Two guineas," answered she, "would purchase my liberty."

I gave her the paltry sum, and she sprung from the ground to thank me, when a thought occurred, that, by wrapping myself in her domino, I might also escape from captivity. I instantly imparted the idea to my companion, and she rejoiced in the probability of its success. The two guineas were paid

for her liberation. The Cerberus of the night, being occupied with a group of new visitors, I slipped on my disguise, and passed the threshold without interruption.

As soon as I felt myself once more at liberty, I tied the domino in my handkerchief, and hastened along the pavement with the utmost expedition. The dawn began to break, and the shops to open. The unfortunate female, by whose assistance I escaped, had given me her address ; and I repaired to her lodgings in the suburbs of Westminster, to return the domino, and to learn more of her unhappy situation.

I found her in an attic chamber, where poverty spread a deep gloom to the eye of the philanthropist, and indolence, the common associate of vice, exhibited a dreadful compound of wretchedness and disorder. On a chimney-shelf stood a few odd tea-cups ; a table, placed in the middle

middle of the room, displayed a variety of cosmetics; half a mirror without a frame; an empty bottle which had contained spirits; a summons from the court of conscience; the gaudy hat, which had adorned her head at the masquerade, and a few halfpence, which the watchman had returned after robbing her of four guineas, the whole of her property. These, together with one broken-backed chair, a tattered bed, a washing-tub, and a piece of painted gauze, fringed with tarnished silver, which had once been a robe, but now served for a window-curtain, and which feebly repelled the air that entered at the shattered casement, composed the furniture of the miserable chamber.

On opening the door, my footsteps recoiled with an involuntary sensation, which seemed to blend the shuddering of horror with the tenderness of commiseration. I beheld, at one glance,

the

the epitome of every human calamity, for, want and depravity, idleness and sorrow, prostitution and death, seemed to spread their destructive spells over every object, and I had scarcely resolution to enter the apartment. Is this the habitation of unprotected woman ! thought I. Is this the last asylum of thy credulous victim, ungrateful man ? My breast throbbed with compassion, and I gazed around me for several minutes, without the power of uttering a syllable.

The unfortunate tenant of this sky-encircled hell received me with a smile, that faintly struggled with a deep blush which overspread her countenance. It was the ensign of shame, and I blessed the conscious power which still resisted the encroachments of depravity. " Poor child of misery !" said I, " thou art not wholly destitute of feeling ; compunction will yet penetrate thy heart ; and the destroying

destroying fiend shall be disappointed of his victim.

I seated myself at the foot of her narrow bed, and looked earnestly at her. She was pale and emaciated. She had divested herself of the flaunting habiliments which had disguised her form, and, wrapped in a long white dressing-gown, looked more interesting than all the tinsel of preposterous fashion could have made her.

A ragged servant girl, who stood labouring at the washing-tub, was her only companion. She was the emblem of poverty; lean, filthy, squallid, and abandoned. Every look, every word proclaimed the little imp an adept in licentiousness ; and though scarcely fifteen years had marked her progress towards iniquity, she seemed to vaunt its enormities with the effrontery of a veteran profligate. After dispatching her with a guinea to order breakfast from a neighbouring

bouiring coffee-house, not without some hesitation, I addressed her disconsolate mistress. "Is this scene of wretchedness your chosen retreat?" said I. "Have you no friend, no kindred bosom to shelter you from a barbarous world?" She sighed, and shook her head. I continued:—

"There is something in your look and manner that seems to say, your earlier prospects were less dreary. If you tread, by choice, the mazes of infamy, I can only lament your errors, and pity you: but if your misguided imagination sometimes wanders back to innocence; if your bosom, betrayed by falsehood and polluted by folly, still sighs for the deserted haunts of virtue; my arm is ready to support, and my hand to guide you."

"Whither can I go?" cried she, sighing. "Society will not receive a fugitive, who has violated every law of propriety.

propriety. I have frequently essayed its paths; I have made many efforts; but in every scene, in every trial of reformation, I have found one enemy."

" Is it possible?" said I. " Lives there a wretch, who would destroy the buds of renovating virtue, at the moment when they are struggling amidst the poisonous weeds of vice? Whom, and what was your enemy?"

" Woman!" replied the trembling penitent: " that cruel torturer of her own frail sex, whose vaunted and fastidious purity has made more hardened profligates than all the arts and machinations of the destroyer, man."

" Go on!" said I; " unburden your full heart;—rail, rail against your enemy, and let every agonizing thought lead you back to the abodes of peace."

" Few women err from innate depravity," continued she. " We are generally

generally the victims of credulity, affection, or that childish vanity which is a part of our existence. But credulity soon awakes from her delusive dream; affection sickens by neglect and insult; and vanity grows weary of her most brilliant achievements: the wanderer then sighs for the calm delights of reason; and with trembling, timid footsteps re-treads the path which she was tempted to abandon: there she reposes, peaceful and unknown: compunction purifies the bosom, which folly contaminated; and experience places a shield before the heart, which nature formed in the mould of sensibility. Then comes the busy demon—calumny; the story of her indiscretion is buzzed abroad; while the envious and obdurate of her own sex, the cold, the ugly, and the ignorant, unite in a terrific phalanx, by taunts and persecutions to drive her back to ruin."

Walsingham

A tor-

A torrent of tears interrupted her;— and the servant girl at that moment returning with the breakfast, the conversation for a time subsided.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

I WAS glad to find a pause in the story of affliction. The truth, which marked every word she uttered, rendered her an object of the tenderest interest; and convinced me, that had she been less lovely, and more kindly treated by the world, she would have proved an ornament to society. Though robbed of the fragile charm of chastity, she still possessed a mind, enlightened by sorrowful experience, and graced with the most transcendent virtues. I rose and walked slowly round her apartment, wishing to allow her agitated spirits an interval,

which

which might give them new powers to repel the tortures of reflection. On the table lay a letter, with the seal broken: I thought I knew the hand-writing on the superscription, and looked earnestly at it for some moments, puzzled by conjecture, and fascinated by curiosity. My companion observed the fixed attention of my countenance, and the object which occasioned it. The attendant imp being ordered to vanish, the conversation was resumed immediately on her departure.

" You are a stranger in this country," said I, " and I doubly lament your distress, because it casts a stigma not only on the benevolence, but the hospitality of the nation."

" I cannot allow the charge," replied the unhappy sufferer, while her cheek became faintly flushed; " I rather think that your country is profusely generous to foreigners, while many worthy and enlightened

enlightened natives are perishing in poverty. Humanity is the characteristic of Britons; but even the noblest acts of liberality lose their claim to applause, when they are indiscriminately exemplified. There is more genuine benevolence in protecting and rewarding one man of genius and virtue, than in often-tatiously supporting a score of vagabonds, whose only claims are a slight pair of heels, and a voice which counteracts its harmony by the insolence of ingratitude. And yet, these exotics are cherished in the hot-bed of fashion, while modest merit retires to some solitary nook, and, too proud to court the smiles of undiscerning patrons, expires, silent, unknown, and unlamented."

"Where hast thou been educated, gentle moralist?" said I, taking her hand, and looking earnestly at her.

She blushed, and sighed with an interesting sadness:—after a short pause of recollection, she replied, "In France." My

My father was highly distinguished for mental perfections, and the education I received was at once my fortune and my destruction. At the death of my parents I was turned adrift on the merciless world : fate threw me into the vortex of dissipation, and I was overwhelmed, before I was aware of the peril that surrounded me."

She paused to weep ; she sobbed like an infant ; her poor wan cheek was bathed with tears. I could have taken her to my bosom with the pure affection of a brother. After an agonizing conflict, she continued :—

"It was my destiny at twelve years old to become the *protégée* of a woman of rank, the most profligate of her sex ; then travelling on the continent—"

I started.—"Your name?" said I, eagerly.

"Julie de Beaumont is my real name ; that which I am known by is an assumed one."

M

"Merciful

"Merciful God!" exclaimed I.
 "The beautiful, the innocent Julie !
 The *élève* of Lady Emily Delvin!"

"You know me then !" cried she, rising from her seat, and trembling convulsively. "Lives there yet a being who deigns to remember the unfortunate Julie?"

"I did know thee once, unhappy victim!" said I, with agitation that almost suppressed the power of utterance. "I was at Nice with my tutor, when he had a rencontre with Lady Emily's lover, who now lies at the point of death."

"She hid her face in my bosom; and, without making any reply, sunk on the ground before me.

A new scene of anguish now burst upon my imagination. I raised her fainting form, and, seating her beside me, conjured her to compose her mind, and to explain the cause of her affliction.

After a strong effort of fortitude, she proceeded in the developement of her misfortunes. Lord Linbourne had won her affections, betrayed her confidence, and abandoned her to misery, in a country to whose language she was then a stranger, and amongst a race of women, whose greatest stigma is that want of pity for their sex's failings, which plunges weakness into criminality, and, by the cruelty of contempt, steels the mind against the precepts of reformation.

I remained the whole morning with the ill-fated Julie; and though I found, by her artless story, that she had been the dupe of Lord Linbourne's villainy, I plainly discovered that he was still the object of her affections. The idea of his perilous situation (though he had only a few days before refused to lend her a small sum for the support of life, under the pressure of sickness) wrung

her

her heart to agony. The letter which lay on the table came from him. I was not mistaken in my conjecture. She sighed when she recapitulated her own sufferings, but she shuddered with horror when she anticipated his annihilation.

Julie de Beaumont was the victim of the gentlest affections; but her mind was too feebly organized to admit of those safeguards, pride and resentment, which seldom fail to counteract the poisons of ingratitude, or to heal the wounds inflicted by duplicity.

Evening advanced before I began to think of my situation. The few hours which I had passed with Julie de Beaumont, had produced a change in her mind that was gratifying to humanity. She had long been beat about by the tempest of affliction, and with joy beheld that pilot who pointed out the harbour where she might repose with safety. I

encouraged the weary wanderer with hopes of brighter prospects; and after presenting her a small sum for her removal to a more decent habitation, took my leave, with a promise to see her again in the course of a few days.

As the sun began to sink in the horizon, I ventured forth, in search of a lodging for the night. After my rencontre in the hotel, and my escape from the watch-house, I did not think it prudent to visit the West end of the town by day-light. A total stranger in the metropolis, I knew not whither I was going till I found myself in Bond-street, where, at the window of a shop, I observed a paper on which was written, "Lodgings to let, with board for a single gentleman, in a private family." I inquired into the particulars, and found that the apartments were to be obtained in a house of considerable respect-

respectability, and that the motive for taking a boarder was more for the sake of society than for any pecuniary advantage.

I was directed to a street in Mayfair, and with a heavy heart I strolled thither. On my arrival I found the house, though not very large, singularly elegant. I knocked at the door, and was immediately ushered into a dining parlour by a man servant. The mistress of the mansion was obliging and well-bred, and I was delighted with the thought of being admitted as one of her family. After naming the terms, which were extremely reasonable, she requested that I would refer her to some person of my acquaintance who could satisfy such inquiries as she should think proper to make.

"You will forgive me, Sir," said Mrs. Woodford; "but as I am honoured with the friendship of the first people in

the kingdom, I am under the necessity of being particularly cautious whom I admit beneath my roof, and into the society of my connections. Of course, you know many who will settle this little point of form; and a reference to any one person of fashion will be sufficient."

I was somewhat at a loss how to arrange this matter of etiquette, without discovering my situation. The danger to which my rash conduct had exposed me, rendered it absolutely necessary that, for a short time, I should change my name, and conceal my family connections. Taken by surprise, I knew not what to say, but with some hesitation answered, that I knew Lady Ethiop, Lord Linbourne, the Duchess of Riversford, and many others of equal rank and consequence in the circles of distinction.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodford smiled : " I am perfectly satisfied," said she; " and, without any further inquiry, shall be delighted to have you as an inmate of my family. Your good sense will excuse the inquisitive delicacy of my question ; for the town is so full of deception, that too much caution cannot be observed in affairs of this nature."

I bowed, but made no reply ; conscious that I had no right to condemn hypocrisy, at the same moment that I meditated to deceive.

I informed Mrs. Woodford, that as I had only arrived in town a short time, I was wholly unsettled in a lodging ; that I wished to be accommodated as soon as possible, meaning to devote many of my hours to study and retirement. She replied, that the apartments were ready for my reception, but that she could only let them for one month, a former lodger having engaged them at the

termination of that period. I agreed to the terms under the name of Montagu, and Mrs. Woodford promised that, before midnight, every thing should be ready for my reception.

CHAP. XXXIX.

I STROLLED towards Brompton, deeply rapt in reflection, and almost indifferent with regard to my own destiny, till the close of twilight; when, after taking some slight refreshment, with slow and lingering steps I returned to my new lodgings. A thousand ideas crowded on my mind during my evening walk; and every moment as I ruminated on the events of the past week, I became more and more careless of an existence which seemed to promise nothing but disappointment.

disappointment. The falsehood and folly of the world does more towards forming a perfect philosopher than all the pedantry of scholastic knowledge obtained in the cell of an anchoret, or the gloom of a cloister. Man may ruminante in the still sequestered scenes of life; but extensive knowledge and proportionate disgust for the mazy miseries of this sublunary sphere, can only be acquired and justly founded on an extensive intercourse with society. The citizen of the world is the only true philosopher: he examines without prejudice; he judges from experience.

My ruminations did not end till I knocked at the door of my new habitation. Mrs. Woodford was a widow of small fortune; but, having a daughter whom she wished to render more independent than herself, and being fond of society, she generally let a part of her house during the winter months to

persons of respectability. She was a woman of a very amiable disposition, singularly good-natured, and sufficiently dim-sighted to overlook the frailties of her friends; while, by the dignity of every virtue in her own person, she set an example worthy of imitation.

Mrs. Woodford was what is commonly called a woman of the world; too highly born and too well educated to rank with the middling class of society; and yet, being neither rich nor titled, condemned to go through all the drudgery of attending to the caprices of those who condescended to countenance and protect her. She was obliged to make regular and daily visits at the doors of her fashionable friends; and, when admitted, to bring either a new selection of anecdotes, or a fresh tale of mystery, to banish the *ennui* of a morning conversation. She was the ready *chaperone* of every miss of the *bau-ton*; the *cherie amie*

ame of every illustrious undecided female character in the circles of dissipation; respectable as an associate, and convenient as a companion; very obliging, very well bred, and very content, though very much degraded.

Mrs. Woodford's deceased husband had been eminently distinguished at the bar, and was reckoned one of the most eloquent pleaders of his time; but, like his accomplished help-mate, he doated on good company, associated with nobles, emulated the splendours of high life, and evinced his lofty spirit by adopting the follies of the ostentatious; till his expensive domestic establishment, luxurious table, and elegant equipages, absorbed the profits of his profession; insomuch that when he died only five thousand pounds, and an annuity of four hundred, Mrs. Woodford's marriage-settlement, remained for the future support of his wife and daughter.

The widow was lively, sensible, and buxom; the daughter lovely, gentle, and accomplished; she had been educated in a convent at Lille, and was, for the second winter, the admiration of the fashionable circles. Mrs. Woodford anticipated all the splendors of dignified parade; she considered her charming Amelia as the future wonder of the courtly sphere! Nothing less than the coronet of a duchess already encircled her brows with visionary ermine, while her dreams of future greatness filled every present moment with unutterable rapture. Miss Woodford was considerably patronized in the world of splendid deception; for, by the relations of her deceased father, some of whom were placed in the upper ranks of fortune, she, on her return to England, had been presented to what is usually termed the very best society.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodford's love of nobility was inordinate; for to her eyes, the tinsel of a coronet had irresistible charms, whatever the head might be which chance had ordained it to decorate; she, by an unaccountable infatuation, discovered graces, even where the robe of nobility overshadowed the vilest distortions of nature; and the regular gradations from folly to criminality bore in her opinion the stamp of guilt, in proportion as the offender took precedence in the etiquette of a drawing-room. She was a perpetual title-hunter; a student of the most indefatigable order in the emblazoned pages of ancient and modern heraldry; not a lion *couchant* nor a griffin rampant, but was her familiar acquaintance; her paths of literary delight, a field sable; and the proudest ascent of her ambitious travels, a chevron towering amidst the gaudy glow of variegated deformity.

She could boast the friendship of more right-honourable dishonourables than a first minister of state, or a newly imported French courtesan. The bare idea of visiting my lady, or being attended by my lord, was to her the most enviable of human enjoyments. The richly-emblazoned chariot of a duchess loitering at her door during a morning visit, and exciting the envy of the vulgar, exhilarated her spirits almost to ecstasy; and a nod of condescension from a prince of the blood-royal never failed to agitate her brain with the fever of delirium. Yet, there was much to commend, even amidst the weakness that degraded her: she was friendly, mild-tempered, charitable, and sincere; the last of these inestimable qualifications exposed her to a thousand dilemmas, and frequently hazarded her popularity in those societies in which she was perpetually duped and delighted.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodford, however, did not wholly confine her pursuits to the general tenor of fashionable propensities;—she knew that there were such things as mental acquirements; and her secondary wish was somewhat more laudable, though not less ambitious, than her first. It was a desire to obtain the good opinion of the present generation, and to have her name handed down with distinction to posterity: with this hope her doors were open to authors and men of talents of every description; and the pride of her right-honourable connections was frequently humbled by a tacit comparison between the adventitious gifts of fortune and the illustrious pre-eminence of native genius. Yet Mrs. Woodford persevered in courting the wise as well as the lofty, because she knew that, in this enlightened æra, the pen is a weapon which mocks the vaunted lance of ancient chivalry; for while it lashes vice

and makes folly tremble, it gives to fame
and virtue that wreath which will bloom
to immortality.

In her early days Mrs. Woodford had
felt an ungovernable inclination to wear
the laurels of Parnassus. Her husband,
being an excellent classical scholar, and
profusely gifted with a torrent of elo-
quence, which perpetually excited the
glow of emulation in her gentle bosom,
she, by his constant persuasion, and that
of her good-natured friends, who hoped
to witness the downfal of her ambition,
at length resolved to brave the shafts of
criticism; and to appear before the aw-
ful tribunal of the public, as a candidate
for literary honours. Intimately ac-
quainted with several reviewers, both
male and. female, she hoped, at least, to
stand acquitted, if not favoured with the
distinctions of their august assembly!—
But woeful was her disappointment!
The honeyed cup of flattery, which had
been

been presented to her in the private circles of hospitality, was dashed with the bitter gall of envy, when publicly demanded in the high court of, what is called, literary justice.

The sacred veneration with which she had been accustomed to behold the dispensers of the laurel wreath rendered her meekly submissive, whenever they thought fit to give their private opinions of her early productions. An enigma, a *jeu d'esprit*, a charade, or a sentimental fragment, frequently found its way into the different magazines with a considerable share of approbation—they were the mere ephemera of their day; and though they buzzed in the dressing-room of a fashionable miss, and displayed their graces at the toilettes of venerable coquettes, they gave no cause for alarm in the broad circle of literary contention; and, exciting little envy, they of course passed uncensured.

uncensured through the ordeal of criticism.

Delighted with the prospect of celebrity which opened to her view, she resolved seriously to invoke the supreme goddess, Fame! and to fall ignobly, or to emulate the loftiest flights of her female contemporaries.

From the moment that she became a formidable rival, the smooth and gentle tide of approbation turned, while the deep gulph of malevolence yawned widely to destroy her. She was not aware of the perils she had to encounter. She knew many classical scholars, many liberal men, from whose knowledge and candour she had to hope for every indulgence; that *such men* should preside in the tribunal of literary judgment, every adventurer in the paths of fame will readily acknowledge; but there are uses and abuses in every office of authority;

thority; the defenceless must yield to the all-powerful; and it is too frequently the case that the most polished works suffer the severity of unjustifiable condemnation, merely to gratify the spleen of individuals, who are as far removed from the glowing impulse of genius, as from the pure and gentle sensations of philanthropy.

You will say, From whence does this injustice proceed?—I will briefly answer —Reviewers are but mortals. There are such beings as wives, sisters, and mistresses: there are pretenders to literary honours, who cannot endure the superiority which they envy; who entertain the mean and despicable imp, called Prejudice; and who, being invested with the supreme honours of criticism, wield the pen with as little mercy as the sanguinary savage guides the blow of his death-inflicting tomahawk.

Let

Let some of our modern dispensers of unlettered wrath, before they condemn a trembling author to shame, and sometimes to despair, ask their own sapient heads, if they could produce such books as their malice would consign to oblivion. On trials by jury, the man who sits in judgment on a fellow-creature, is bound by sacred engagements to do justice: why then is the existence of that fame which is, to many, dearer than vitality, to await the barbarous caprice of an *unknown* enemy! Is there no punishment due to the being who wantonly destroys another's hopes, and takes from talents, industry, and truth, the means of obtaining an honourable subsistence? What will draw forth the dawning ray of intellect, but emulation? Can the lustre of mental perfection struggle through gathering clouds, or resist the perpetually freezing blasts of a critical

atmo-

atmosphere? Let it be remembered, that true genius is, of all things in nature, the most irritably alive to every attack which menaces a diminution of that fame which is the pride of its existence. Let the candid reader recollect that *one* mean and dastardly assailant can over-shadow the prospects of a *legion*, whose mental powers would enlighten the world, and who, if properly taught to resist the petty tyranny, would live in the annals of their country, when their calumniator's name was no longer remembered.

There is another species of danger which has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished: the inquisitorial severity of a phalanx, who, being themselves unsuccessful candidates for literary honours, watch, with the untiring industry of that green-eyed monster Jealousy, for an opportunity to depreciate those talents which they never

can

can aspire to emulate. These journey-men of Parnassus, after butchering the offspring of a poor helpless scribe, fatten on the wages of their barbarity, and steal the purer particles of other men's brains, while they condemn the mass to complete annihilation. This is not all:—the political tendency of a work is, in these momentous times, of no small importance. Some critics invariably abuse one species of doctrine, while they as uniformly uphold and commend the other; while those who are known to promote their different tenets are certain of protection, though their volumes were the receptacles for stolen goods, furbished up from obsolete romances, blackletter fragments, ingenious forgeries, or the stale Salmagundi of circulating libraries.

Mrs. Woodford's first work of any importance—a Novel in one small volume—was so interspersed with virtuous precepts,

precepts, so embellished with liberal sentiments, so correct in its moral tendency, and so severe upon the profligacy of the rising generation, that few people would notice it; while the circulating libraries condemned it as dull unprofitable stuff, wholly unfit to entertain the majority of their readers. A few inquisitive misses, indeed, exerted themselves so far as to turn over the leaves, and to glean the wormwood of the nauseous lesson; while they scribbled their unlettered rage on the wide waste of margin, and without the smallest touch of sympathetic pity, consigned the timid author to the lash of puerile ridicule. Their ingenuity did not rest here:—they made it their daily task to abuse the arrogant moral-mender, and employed all the docile danglers of the *haut ton* to ridicule the petticoat pedant, till it was equally the fashion to abuse the work, and to reprobate its author.

Her

Her second effort (for genius is not to be intimidated by ignorance and folly) was a satirical Poem. Every body longed to see it! day after day the most popular newspapers teemed with advertisements, and expectation was raised on tip-toe, almost to agony. The proud, the glorious morn arose! the timid, trembling candidate for fame looked forward to a prosperous harvest. But, alas! only a few copies were distributed, when the publisher, being menaced with a prosecution, suppressed the sale, and the well hot-pressed pages were coolly condemned to an untimely exit:—nay more, the very person whom it was meant to satirize was permitted to review it; and its dying speech was published, with all the acrimony of puny malice, before the poetical lesson had received the final sentence of the public. Weary of that triumphant tyranny which deals out injustice where impartiality

ality *ought* to hold the even scale, she now essayed a less hazardous mode of travelling towards Parnassus ; an Ode, written on a popular subject, was submitted to the discerning eye of a lady, whose rank alone was sufficient to make the world admire it. The precious *morceau* was received with great condescension ; nay, so very great, that a promise was made to look it over in the course of the ensuing summer, and to recommend it to the whole circle of her acquaintance. The gentle patroness did not break her word : the ode *was* read ; but it was ushered into the *beau monde* as her *own* composition, and Mrs. Woodford, having imprudently destroyed the original, was obliged to wink at the poetical larceny, without a hope of retribution, or a possibility of punishing the exalted offender.

Her next production was a Romance of most terrific tendency !—all the horrible

rible accompaniments of ghosts, groans, graves, blood-stained hands, daggers, caverns, velvet canopies, and livid lightnings, were displayed in long-drawn cavalcade to frighten school-girls, and to puzzle modern pedants. But the ill-fated author, having offended a Reviewer by inattention, or want of admiration for what he deemed his superior judgment, her book of terrors ! her soul-enchanting pages of supernatural, metaphysical, historical, eventful wonders, was condemned, executed, cut up, hashed, frittered, minced, and disguised, by a jaundiced mind, and a daring hand ; while the plot was distorted, and deemed an heterogeneous mass, fit only to feed the gloating eyes of those readers, who skim the pages of criticism to enjoy a fellow author's humiliation, or to scatter abroad the sour cream of envy and malevolence : yet this kind and liberal friend dined at Mrs. Woodford's table,

table with the critique in his pocket, and condescended to receive her civilities at the very moment that he ridiculed her hospitality!

The work which followed—for she was not yet dismayed—was a Tragedy, called “*Lucretia and Tarquin; or, The Triumphs of Chastity.*” The piece was brought forward in the month of June; the story Roman, the dresses Spanish, and the scenery Venetian. Many of the situations were anticipated as too warm for the languid nerves of infant coquettes, while the more experienced mammas declared that they wanted novelty. The modern *petit maître* condemned the fable as antediluvian; and the grey-headed libertine positively declined supporting a play, which could only be productive of unpleasing reflections, while it presented an example wholly out of nature. This was not the sum total of objections:—The actors were

dissatisfied with the distribution of the characters. Every lady insisted on being the heroine, and no gentleman would undertake to be the hero. The manager was weary of the business; and his accomplished deputy, though graced with all the advantages of a fine person and a classical education, having once failed in a similar character, walked over the boards with a degree of *sang froid* that chilled the whole audience. Added to these perplexing events, the taste of the town was hostile to works of real merit; and though the tragedy had much beauty of thought, with many situations of an interesting nature, it was performed on the first night to a drowsy audience, on the second to empty benches, and on the third was withdrawn, to await a resurrection in a less Gothic form on the groaning shelves of a manager's lumber-room. She printed the tragedy; but a sapient hypercritic
having

having the first scene of a play on the same subject, nearly half finished, poor Mrs. Woodford's excellent blank verse was denominated “ frothy bombast, a feeble outline, coloured beyond the limits of poetical licence, and fraught with improbabilities that set both nature and reason at defiance !”

Still the indefatigable Spirit of Genius hovered round the fountain of Helicon, and though its expanding wings had been frost-nipped by disappointment, its eye beamed with the lustre of Hope; while the anticipating demon Envy urged her on to a new scene of humiliation.

The next serpent which offered the forbidden laurel to this child of Eve appeared in the airy form of a modern Comedy. But it was nearly fatal in its effects; and, by its unpalatable qualities, threatened to banish her for ever from the Paradise of fashion. This

sylph of morality, though dressed in all the outward trappings of refined dissipation, was Gothic enough to utter truths which offended the pride of elegant insignificance ; it was consequently pre-condemned as soon as rehearsed, and completely damned before it could offer up a prayer for salvation. A principal actress read her part to a profligate hag of distinction ; she, fancying that every line presented a mirror which reflected her own deformity, roused a nest of sympathizing hornets, who, by every shuffling, unjustifiable, and extraordinary trick, (for many of them were adepts in odd tricks and shuffling,) by every violation of public decorum, interrupted its progress, intimidated the performers by anonymous letters, threatened the author with personal danger, talked of pulling the threate about the ears of the manager, till, by sweeping with the breath of envy and malevolence the wholesome worm-

wormwood from the stage, they put a period to Mrs. Woodford's literary mania, and added a new wreath of bells to the cap of ignorance and folly.

CHAP. XL.

I PASSED an hour in conversation with my new associates; and before we parted I was acquainted with all her right honourable private anecdotes, from the generous indiscretions of "the glass of fashion," to the eccentric amours of him whose peccadillo follies are the subject of universal ridicule. She never condescended to mention an untitled acquaintance, and her voice seemed attuned by nature to ring the uninteresting changes of a court calendar. My thoughts never-

theless were incessantly wandering to distant objects ; and the memory of happier moments embittered every hope of future consolation.

Weary with the day's solicitude, and feverish for want of rest, at length I retired to my chamber ; but sleep seemed destined to visit me no more : I ruminated, closed my eyes, slumbered, started, and again quitting my pillow, with my pencil wrote the following stanzas.:

The loathsome toad, whose mis'ry feeds
On noxious dews and baneful weeds,
Disgusts the startled sight :
Yet when the sultry vapours low'r,
He drinks the poison, from each flow'r
Shook by the wings of night.

Behold the dazzling speckled snake,
Writhing amidst the leafy brake,
Gilt by the beams of day !
Mark, as the wond'ring victim's eyes
Fix on the beauteous orient dyes,
The traitor flings his prey.

Trace

Trace but the moral, simply true,
There nature's varying pictures view,
Whose outward forms deceive ;
Where worth in loathsome garb we find,
While pride and vice, with pow'r combin'd,
In splendid baseness live !

The agonies of reflection increased with every moment, and before daylight I was almost delirious. Again I started from my bed, traversed my chamber, and, by the most incoherent exclamations, alarmed the whole family. Mrs. Woodford's man-servant forced the door, and by persuasive intreaties endeavoured to tranquillize my spirits : but I obstinately refused to re-enter my bed ; and, having half-dressed myself, hastily demanded pen, ink, and paper.

They were instantly brought. I wrote many unintelligible lines, and uttered the wildest language of a confirmed maniac. Still I was sensible of every thing around me ; and though the pa-

roxyism of frenzy became ungovernable, the powers of observation were not wholly annihilated.

My ravings were in a short time interrupted by the arrival of a physician, whom Mrs. Woodford had sent for to my assistance. Doctor Pimpernel entered my chamber with a boisterous tone and a thundering knock, which alarmed me into silence. At first I took him for an officer of justice, but by his pompous, though ever-varying jargon, I soon discovered that he was a disciple of Esculapius. After fixing his eyes on me for several minutes with oppressive inquisitiveness, he exclaimed, "The fellow's mad! mad, by G—d! but I can set him to rights. What is he? Who is he? Whence came he? Where is he going? What are his politics? How do you call him?" Then turning towards Miss Woodford, who was just entering the room, he continued,

ed, “ Beautiful Amelia ! how enchanting you look ! Well, well : when did you see Lady Ethiop, and your elegant little friend Miss Casino ? Divine creature ! my whole soul is up in arms whenever I behold her ! but she is passing away like a resplendent vision on the edge of the amorous horizon !—Curse the metaphor —it puts me in mind of that destructive composition which has manacled the human race with unforged fetters !—Come, give me a pen and some paper ; time is precious : ‘ the times are out of joint.’ —I have no time for any thing but for gazing on you, beautiful Amelia !”

Here he began to write a prescription, when suddenly throwing down the pen, he continued :

“ When did you see your noble cousin, Lord Kencarth ? He is a brilliant star, in the dark hemisphere of modern nobility : but the sun of reason is rising rapidly ;—it will flame ;—it will burn,

—it will blaze ! When was this fellow taken ill ? He'll die, by G—d ! a fever is scorching him up to cinders : poor devil ! is he in love ? Cure him, Amelia, cure him.” Again he wrote a word or two, and again renewed the discourse with, “ Wonderful news from the continent ! I left the old Duchess of Bloom-ingdell in hysterics. Well, no matter —she has lived long enough : d—n old women—they are only fit to fee physicians, and to propagate false politics.”

“ Pray finish the prescription,” cried Miss Woodford ; “ Mr. Montagu is overwhelmed with fever.” A third time the grey goose’s quill was put in motion, the doctor rubbing his forehead, and at the same time gloating on Amelia—
“ Something to warm the blood, and animate the nervous system—too cold by half—chilled—petrified—freezing, as the loftiest pinnacle of mount Cenis !

Miracu-

Miraculous! so near the sunshine of such transcendent beauty!"

" You mistake the case," cried Mrs. Woodford: " Mr. Montagu is in a high fever; he has been nearly delirious the whole night; feel his pulse, and you will be convinced."

" Be quiet, old woman," answered the doctor, again rubbing his contracted brow. " The foolish fellow, I tell you, is in love; I know his case—have often felt it—see it at this moment on the tip of his nose—in his right eye—on his forehead;—damme, on the very point of his chin. Well, you must cure him, Amelia: the sublime essence of your odiferous breath will do the business. Nothing like the balsamic smile of a beautiful woman! More efficacious than all the drugs in Christendom; more skilful than all the bunglers of Warwick-lane. The breath-of beauty would re-animate the heart of a dying anchoret!"

Nothing like it! I always recommend it in cases of extreme danger; seldom find it fail, where the patient is gifted with the true essence of sublime sensibility. Keep a list ready to fill up my prescriptions; all colours, all sizes, black, white, red, and yellow; French, English, Irish, and Italian: rare drugs; in fine perfection; the divine promoters of universal liberty! Well."

"What is the doctor talking about?" said Amelia.

"Be quiet, be quiet," cried Doctor Pimpernel. "Ask no questions, you little hussey, but tell me, when did you see the pretty, plump, dimple chin? Too old, but devilish handsome! Tended her last winter in a nervous fever. Mistook the case;—treated it like the dropsy;—was taken in by appearances: —mum for that. Got her through after all. Devilish snug!—Nothing said about it, but what was buzzed by a few
old

old women. I like little dimple-chin, because she was fond of my friend Jack Daudlecourt, who presented me to his sister, who introduced me to Lord John Readywit, who recommended me to his grandmother, who hopped off soon after and left him a thumping fortune. One good turn deserves another. Old women ought to die. What say you, beautiful Amelia?"

The attention which I paid to this strange farago of incoherent nonsense produced that calm interval of taciturnity which cooled my brain, and recalled my powers of thinking; when the doctor, rising abruptly, and putting the half-finished prescription into his pocket, continued:—

" Cannot stay—must be at Highgate by nine, on a consultation. Overwhelmed with practice;—dine every day with the first men in the kingdom;—walk arm in arm with nothing but nobles;

bles; always take the wall, and shove the blockheads into the kennel: a pack of vagabonds all together: no matter for that;—they give sumptuous dinners! Recommend me to the divine creatures. Double profit.—Do a great deal of private business among women of fashion: but none so handsome as you, beautiful Amelia! Well. Now let us see what is to be done.” The doctor again felt my pulse; rubbed his forehead—hemmed—shook his head—and exclaimed, “A pretty business this—up to an hundred and sixty!—Flaming like Vesuvius! Ætna! Caucasus! All your fault, Amelia! Cure him, cure him.” Miss Woodford turned towards the window, with a frown of indignation.

“Do you recommend sleep to Mr. Montagu?” said Mrs. Woodford.

“Sleep!” exclaimed the doctor, again forgetting my situation: “Have not slept all night. Supped at the Earl of

Thistledown's, with a French Countess.—The Earl—never well without me—feel his pulse every day:—don't much like to touch him;—always think of *nemo me impune lacessit*. Pity the poor little Countess!—Game up on the continent.—Never saw such a divine creature! The *Venus de Medicis* a drab to her. Only seventeen—rather too old—have been in a fever ever since. Fresh as Hebe! Haughty as Juno! Beautiful as Love! Drinks like Bacchus! Smiles—like the vertical sun-beams, showering gold on the luscious hills of Tuscany! There's a simile! or rather a *Semele*! Wish I was her Jupiter. Well; now to business.

“ Have you got the morning papers? Generally have those that are worth reading by five o'clock. Dabble a bit in literature myself. Mind you don't blab, Mrs. Woodford: all old women

women love talking ;—some pretend to write :—insolent baggages !”

The doctor was trudging off, bludgeon in hand, when Miss Woodford requested to know what I might eat.

“ Any thing, nothing,—every thing, no matter what ; if you will but shed the lustre of those divine eyes upon him !” So saying, he thundered down the stairs, leaving me just in the same situation, and burning with fever, as I was when he entered my chamber.

“ The doctor is a charming man !” cried Mrs. Woodford, “ though he does talk a little wildly ; but then, his vivacity is so pleasant, and he is such a favourite amongst people of fashion ! Nobody knows the services he has rendered to some of our very first nobility. Lady Amaranth idolizes him ! Miss Casino consults him on all occasions : the Duchess of Riversford is never easy without

without him : Miss Amoret declares, that he has been of essential service to her in a very precarious state of health ; and the still charming Lady Ethiop finds such a change in her constitution by his assistance, that she declares it is almost as miraculous as washing the Black-a-moor white. Never was there a man so universally beloved by the women ! ”

“ Pardon me, Madam,” interrupted Miss Woodford, “ if I beg leave to mention myself as an exception : Doctor Pimpernel is my aversion : his hypocrisy would, alone, teach me to despise him, even if his licentious conversation afforded no plea for my abhorrence. He has often soothed your ear with fulsome praise, one moment ; and the very next ridiculed the weakness of our sex, for crediting his duplicity.”

Mrs. Woodford seemed piqued at this unwelcome intelligence, and quitted the

room

room abruptly. Amelia followed, and I remained with the servant, who consented to leave me, on condition that I would tranquillize my mind, and endeavour to sleep away its inquietude.

CHAP. XLI.

I PASSED the whole day in my chamber, burning with fever, and wearied with a combination of perplexing ideas. The uncertainty of Lord Linbourne's fate, and the solicitude which I felt to know what was become of my generous friend Colonel Aubrey, by turns agitated my brain: but Isabella hung about my heart, and, in the wide circle of accumulating sorrow, still remained the central object of attraction. Sir Sidney's elopement with Lady Emily, had left her entirely

tirely unprotected, and I had more than half resolved to revisit Glenowen, in the hope of finding her; when pride contemned the meanness of the experiment, and put an end to the plan, before it was digested by reason. Wrapped in the visionary gloom of melancholy, I poured forth the feelings of my heart in that language which was most congenial to its sorrow :

Teach me, Love, since thy torments no precepts can cure,
Since reflection and reason deny me relief ;
Oh ! teach me thy scorn and thy wrongs to endure,
While the balm of resentment shall solace my grief.

Let my sighs never heave, let my tears never flow,
Let the smile of contempt the stern victor defy ;
For the tear has a charm which no art can bestow,
And the language of love is the soul-breathing sigh.

Let me shun the proud despot who causes my care,
Lest the torture I suffer should feed her disdain,
For my tyrant delights in the pang of despair,
And the sound which she loves is the deep groan of
pain.

I will

I will traverse the desert, climb mountains untrod,
Where reflection shall sadden with legions of woes;
I will cool my scorch'd brain on the dew-moisten'd sod,
While around my torn bosom the loud tempest blows.

Yet the mild breath of morning shall bid the storm fly,
And the sun's glowing wreath shall encircle the steep,
But my bosom shall never forget the deep sigh,
Nor my eyes lose the vision that prompts them to weep!

Then, O where shall I wander, in search of repose,
Where explore that oblivion which calms the wrung breast,
Since the lover finds sorrow wherever he goes,
And the world has, for passion, no pillow of rest?

To the grave! where the tyrant is rebb'd of his pow' r,
Where complainings shall cease, for no anguish is there;

While the breathing destroyer shall live a short hour,
Till the pang of remorse ends the reign of despair.

I was interrupted by a message from Mrs. Woodford, requesting that I would take tea with a select party of her friends, whom she expected in the evening. Little disposed to mingle in society, I at first declined the invitation, but the request was so earnestly repeated by Miss Wood-

Woodford, that I promised, as soon as I could dress myself, to obey their summons.

When I entered the drawing-room, I found that I was too early for the fashionable hour of meeting. It was scarcely eight o'clock, and the only person arrived was Mr. Optic; a character well known in the literary world, and no less distinguished for talents than esteemed for benevolence. He was earnestly employed in writing a prologue for a widow's benefit; and, on my entering the room, did not observe me. Fearful of disturbing his poetical reverie, I stole softly towards the window; and stepping into the balcony, enjoyed the evening breezes but a few minutes, when a female voice solicited charity:

"I am poor and destitute of friends," cried the forlorn petitioner, "and have here an infant, who is rendered blind by the

the cruel experiments of a German quack-doctor."

Mr. Optic started from his poetical trance, and putting the prologue in his pocket, rushed into the balcony. The beggar repeated her mournful story, and, being desired to enter the passage, Mr. Optic hastily descended to receive her.

"There he goes!" cried Miss Woodford, "the worthiest of mortals: a man, who, with the shield of gaiety, covers a heart perpetually throbbing for the woes of his fellow-creatures: a man, who, with all the rattling loquacity of a mere mad-cap, is never truly happy, but in performing acts of humanity; who, while he makes fools and knaves his enemies, secures the esteem and admiration of every discerning mind. Let us watch him," continued Miss Woodford: "but tread softly, I conjure you, for

for his benevolence will not endure the intruding eye of observation."

We stole to the first landing-place, from whence we contemplated Mr. Optic, with the infant on his knee, exploring those orbs that were for ever veiled in darkness. We observed him wipe away a tear which his eye had dropped on the cheek of the little sufferer; and heard him say, with a sigh that proceeded from the heart, "Alas! poor innocent, thy state is hopeless! All the efforts of mortal knowledge cannot pour one ray of light into those dim and beamless sockets." He then returned the infant to its mother, gave her his purse, bade her exert all her fortitude to support the pressure of maternal sorrow; and, gently closing the door after her, returned to the drawing-room.

We were now joined by the Duke of Heartwing, who entered the room growling

ing at the abuses of the police, in suffering vagrants to crowd the doors of the nobility. "I met," said he, "a miserable object, half starved, and filthy, who, thrusting a blind brat in my face, nearly made me stumble under the wheels of my carriage. Such sights should be kept from this end of the town, and wholly confined to the obscure regions of St. Giles's. I make it a rule never to encourage idleness, unless the objects are young and pleasing to look on, and then I take care to find them employment."

"Your grace's discrimination is too well known to require a comment," said Mr. Optic: "You have always a fair plea for your acts of generosity; and your arms are ever open to the objects of your benevolence."

"You are severe, Mr. Optic," cried the duke; "and with half an eye I can discover your meaning; but as you are a poet,

a poet, I must allow your imagination to wander ; you deal in fiction."

" I spoke of your grace's generosity, and benevolence, and so far I plead guilty," replied Mr. Optic, smiling.

The duke drew his chair into the balcony to contemplate a pretty house-maid at an opposite window, and to avoid Doctor Pimpernel, who was then knocking with vehement impetuosity at the street-door.

After a dozen bows to his grace, and a nod of " How do ye?" to Mr. Optic, the doctor advanced towards me with—
 " Well, my noble fellow! How are you? You took my prescription? I see you did, you would have been food for worms if you hadn't, by G—d. Well, and how fares it with you? Fever gone—blood temperate—pulses quiet—head cool—hey? Could not come before; was detained by a parcel of medical blockheads—all fools—know no-

thing of physic—Where is the divine Amelia?—Pretty jade—longed to kiss her this morning, but was afraid of offending the old woman. D—n all mothers—only spoil sport—Well!—How often did you take the draughts—saved your life, my noble fellow.—Where's Amelia?"

Here the doctor whispered something to the Duke of Heartwing, and I ventured to edge in a word or two, by informing him, that I had not followed his advice for the best of all possible reasons, because he had never left me a prescription.

" Not written a prescription! hey! how—when—what—Let me see!—Let me see!—Well!"

" You began one several times, but other objects intervening, the whole was not completed," said I, gravely.

" I understand you," replied the doctor; " you are right—right, my noble fellow!

fellow! No minding business when the passions are in rebellion; can never think of physic when Amelia is present. How long have you known her?—Why don't you marry her? Make haste—she is eighteen—three years too old—hate old women!—Got cursedly into fashion! Well! Patience! patience! it cannot last long—the game will soon be up. The broad beams of human reason are expanding in one vast glow from Indus to the pole! Man was created to fly, to outstrip the eagle! for, as my friend Doleful says—

• The *silver* moon shall light the hills to dance,
The *golden* sun shall drink old ocean dry.
The *sapphire* mountains shrink to vallies low,
The day be *black*, the midnight *welkin* glow,
Ere truth and reason shall be hurl'd from France,
And *Liberty* in chains a *captive* lie.'

" Sublime!—Nobody writes like Dole! Every word an epigram! every

line a little world of philosophy! Mark the point—mark the *burling*—mark the *lie*! Truth in ev'ry iota! Lofty as Pindar! deep as Aristotle! sarcastic as Junius! Beats Milton, Shakespeare, Virgil, and Horace, all to nothing! Well! do you recollect a famous couplet in Doleful's last popular composition?—

—“ Turn to France and view,
Five million men in arms, in red and blue:
O! may such godlike spirits ever be
The friends of freedom and of liberty!”

“ There's fancy, variety, epithet, pathos, metaphor, allegory, and climax! Never talk of the old school-mistress, the turner of couplets, or the inspired milk-woman—or Laura, or your Annas and Matildas, your Sapphos and Petrarchs—or your Mæviads, and your Bæviads!—Doleful is the very cream of poetry—rich, pure, flowing, sweet!—The fountain of Helicon—the flowery top of Par-naffus!—

nassus!—Clear as the Thames—various as the Rhine—wild as the Rhone—vast as the Nile—smooth as the Arno—and grand as the Danube! Well! how is your fever?—have you slept?—are your pulses quiet?—is your head cool?—can you eat?—can you drink, my noble fellow? Drink and drive care away. *A propos!*—Where is the divine little jade, the beautiful Amelia?"

Mr. Doleful was now ushered in; he approached the circle with a timid bow, and, with a deep sigh, took his seat in a corner of the room.

"Doleful, my boy!" cried the good-humoured Optic; "come, you must read some of your elegiac stanzas; we want something to make us merry."

"Do, do," added the doctor; "they always teem with true patriotic fire! fine stuff—better by half than a score of sudorifics! Will sweat the whole universe—clear the head, lighten the body,

thin the blood, renovate the constitution.
Begin, begin—‘ the croaking raven doth
bellow for revenge !’ Well.”

Mr. Doleful unfolded a small paper,
and, with a low tremulous voice, began
to read the following

S O N N E T.

The gauzy rock, while round its purple side
The shuttle of the morn shall weave sweet flow’rs,
Shall bid its cobweb veil on zephyrs glide,
While goffmary tears gem ocean’s bow’rs.
The plumpy poet of the glade shall say,
Sad are thy plainings to the noon-tide moon,
And dark and silent is thy ebon day,
While Nature’s songsters join the thrilling tune;
Soon in the blissful torments of despair,
Thy freezing woe shall melt the list’ning grove,
And thou the joys of hell with dæmons share,
And curse the sky-light lamps that lead to love!
Till the CREATOR blush with shame to see,
How very, very keen, a LOVER’s pangs MAY BE !

A dead silence followed. Mr. Optic,
looking with a sidelong glance at Dole-

ful for several minutes, at length gravely asked him, why he did not compose a dictionary of poetical epithets? "The novelty of the thing would make it sell," said he.

"Ah! novelty is the thing!" exclaimed the duke; "nothing like it."

Mr. Optic continued—"I do not remember ever having met with *sky-light lamps* or *noon-tide moons* in Milton or Young, or even in the obscure pages of Chaucer and Spenser. This is certainly a new æra in poetry, and, with a voluminous glossary, a work upon the subject would stand a chance of puzzling the *virtuosi* of posterity; at least it would be sure to escape the lash of modern criticism; for the mystery in which it is enveloped, would render the task too laborious for moderate capacities."

"That is the only reason why I admire the poetry of the present age," cried the duke: "I detest every thing that the multitude can partake of."

"And yet your grace will sometimes quit the flowery eminence of fashion, and rove towards the common," said Mr. Optic gravely.

"His grace is a voluptuary!" interrupted the doctor: "the blossoms of superlative delight grow beneath his very footsteps!" Then turning to Doleful, he whispered — "Stupid old blockhead! but the game is almost up."

Doleful bowed a modest assent, and sighed as he rose from his seat to welcome Amelia.

"You are arrived too late, amiable Miss Woodford," cried the doctor.— "The English Apollo has been reading one of his exquisite and sublime compositions. Have you nothing more about you?" continued he, addressing the poet—"nothing tender, ludicrous, amatory, patriotic, or familiar?"

"The first he wisely reserves as an emblem of modern reputation," cried
Mr.

Mr. Optic; “the last he considers as *your forte*,” addressing the doctor; “the amatory and ludicrous compose the province of his grace; and the patriotic has long been the characteristic of every true Briton.”

“I have lately attempted quite a new thing,” cried Mr. Doleful;—“a poetical sermon.”

Here a loud laugh burst from the whole circle.

“I hope there is a chorus,” cried the duke. “D—me, if you can take orders, Mr. Poet, I’ll make you my domestic chaplain.”

“He had better bring it out at the theatre,” said Mr. Optic; “there every poet takes orders; and if religion will not save it from damnation, what will?”

Mr. Doleful sighed deeply.

“Well, my boy,” continued Mr. Optic, “did you ever find a man courageous enough to preach your tuneful

lesson of morality? or did you mean that it should be sung? Was it enigmatical or theological? I should suppose the former, from the usual tendency of your writings.”

“ It was to have been preached by the curate of Ambervale,” replied the poet; “ but he, unfortunately, being engaged to dine with the bishop at an early hour, and being ravenously hungry, after a general and pious fast for a continuance of bloodshed, my sermon was cut short in two; and, almost as soon as it saw light, was condemned to die—”

“ Without benefit of clergy!” interrupted Mr. Optic; “ that was devilish hard indeed! But you may alter it into a pantomime; I dare say it will have equal merit in every situation.”

“ I had some idea of turning it into a *ballet*,” said Doleful.

“ Why

"Why that would be placing it on a good footing with the spectators," replied Mr. Optic, "and would probably tickle their fancy to some tune. Perhaps it would serve for a finale to Mr. Pang's atheistical doctrines: and it is time that the abominable system of unbelief should be checked, lest every moral virtue should perish by its influence."

"I have advised Doleful to publish by subscription," said the doctor.

"A lucky thought," interrupted Mrs. Woodford; "and I will exert my influence with all my right-honourable friends."

"Then no doubt he will have a noble list," said Mr. Optic; "and as talents will be wanting to the work, I will engage to set down the literati."

"That you do every day," cried Amelia, laughing.

"Witty rogue!" exclaimed the doctor; "but what cannot beauty do?"

" Make old men wise," said Mrs. Woodford.

His grace looked contemptuously.

" Or old women candid," added the doctor.

The duke half smiled—Mrs. Woodford frowned.

" One would imagine that you were an author, doctor, by your irritability," said Mr. Optic; " you speak with critical feeling: what ill-starred reviewer has presumed to dash the cup of physic with the gall of severity?"

" I do not understand you," said the doctor, rubbing his forehead; " and as for the reviewers, by the immortal gods ! I set their malice at defiance ! My works are beyond their comprehension ! There is not a man in the kingdom that knows any thing about the matter besides myself. I am the phoenix of physic ! the only Being on the face of the earth who has really dived into the arcanum of medicine !

medicine! I have done more in the experimental way than all the gossips of our fraternity. Did you never read my book upon Barley-water?—Five volumes quarto! with notes medical, critical, botanical, and methodical!—The first work that ever was published!”

“ Of the kind,” said Mr. Optic, gravely.

“ Of any kind! by the Eternal Powers!” exclaimed the doctor: “ I expect that it will run through forty editions. Lady Amaranth declares that it is the sublime preserver of youth! and she has drank nothing but barley-water since my treatise was first published. Those who wish to live long, should live abstemiously.—The divine grain, mixed with the celestial and limpid fluid, will make the bloom of beauty vegetate for ever! Well!”

“ Of

" Of course you follow the regimen which you so strenuously recommend," said Mr. Optic.

" Why," answered the doctor, rubbing his forehead, " I do not think that starving exactly agrees with my constitution. There are spirits that want subduing, as there are others which ought to be raised."

" Agreed," said Mr. Optic; " and both for the benefit of the constitution."

The doctor hemmed, and scowled at the remark. The duke exclaimed—

" Bravo! By G—d, Mr. Optic, you are a man of sound understanding, and I honour your opinions. Let the doctor's nostrums thin the breathing race, I recommend that system which will add strength and dignity to the whole circle of humanity!"

" I know nothing about humanity," said the doctor angrily: " I am for that sublime

sublime arrangement of things which will purify the body politic, and invigorate the system of universal reformation."

"Not morally, I hope!" said the duke.

"Only physically," cried Mr. Optic; "the doctor is too wise to commence a system which the conduct of his whole life has set at defiance."

The party was now augmented by the arrival of Miss Amoret, and her inseparable friend Mrs. O'Liffy. Mr. Optic took his leave for a short time to visit a neglected author, whom his philanthropy had preserved from perishing. After making a memorandum to get Doleful a long list of subscribers, he bestowed on the trifling circle a sigh of commiseration! A zephyr, which had been contemplating a weeping Cupid on Miss Amoret's fan, caught it as it alighted on the bosom of beauty, lest it should infuse the sting of reflection, and thereby

thereby destroy the zest of the evening's entertainment.

CHAP. XLII.

DURING supper, a servant ushered in Mr. Gnat, the author and reviewer. At the sound of his name an undescribable sensation seemed to thrill through every bosom. The duke reddened with indignation; the doctor grew pale; Miss Amoret assumed a modest reserve; and Mrs. O'Liffy, for once, softened her voice into the mildness of good breeding. The universal change of looks and manners was astonishing. Mr. Doleful was the only person who paid the critic the smallest attention on his entering the room, and the stillness which followed proved how little his presence was desired by all, excepting Mrs. Woodford—Mr. Doleful's civilities being mere baits to ensuré a line

a line of commendation for his next satirical novel.

Mr. Gnat, conscious of his powers to alarm, to irritate, and to sting, whenever he condescended to mingle with unphilosophical society, took his seat with becoming dignity; and, after looking round the circle with a mixture of pity and contempt, selected Mr. Doleful as the only individual worthy of his notice. The doctor made many unsuccessful efforts to attract the critic's eye; but his freezing reserve checked the timid advances, and a silence of several minutes again prevailed. At length, the man of pompous words summoned a *quantum sufficit* of that powerful stimulus called Resolution, and, with many “hems” and grotesque attitudes, thus addressed the pensive philosopher:

“ Sir!—Mr. Gnat:—I have long sought for the honour of cultivating your acquaintance. The very distinguished

guished rank which you hold in the resplendent sphere of literature, places you so far above the common race of mortals, that you cannot be astonished when I pronounce you the greatest politician, writer, critic, and philosopher of any past, present, or future century!—The sublimity of your works, the depth of your metaphysical knowledge, the classical refinement of your language, and the prophetic lore which surpasses all human comprehension, has long been felt by the school of true inspiration! and will never cease to illumine the world, till the gorgeous sun goes out like the snuff of a candle."

Mr. Gnat bowed, and endeavoured to look satisfied.

" Give him a little more," whispered Doleful; " he can bear it."

The doctor continued :

" Your works, Mr. Gnat, your grand and unequalled compositions!
will

will live—by the immortal gods!—till this eternal orb shall perish!—Your last book was more enlightened than Longinus! more profound than Aristotle!—Rousseau never wrote any thing like the immortal Gnat!"

"*Never!*" cried Mr. Optic, at that moment entering the room.

"It is the very quintessence of pure and metaphysical writing!" added the doctor. "The fire of Junius, the fancy of Shakespeare, the reasoning of Locke; every page contains a mine of knowledge!"—Then, turning towards Doleful, the doctor whispered, "What is the title? for I never read it."

"A Treatise on Things incomprehensible; or, A metaphysical Inquiry into the Manners and political Opinions of unknown Nations," replied Doleful, in a low voice.

The doctor nodded his thanks.

"Your

"Your incomprehensible treatise, Mr. Gnat," said he, "your exquisite unknown opinions, will live!—By its sublime and metaphysical powers, it will live longer than any work in the language, except my dissertation on Barley-water!"

Mr. Gnat burst into a loud laugh, which considerably disconcerted the doctor. Miss Woodford, perceiving his chagrin, endeavoured to change the subject. "Have you seen Mr. Cynic's last new comedy?" said she, addressing Mr. Gnat.

"I have not."

"That is very extraordinary!" cried Mrs. Woodford. "I thought you entertained the highest veneration for his talents?"

"And therefore I do not wish to see his comedy," said Mr. Gnat. "I should be sorry to change my opinion."

"Have

"Have you any new works in hand?" said Mr. Doleful.

"Two."

"Metaphysical or philosophical?"

"Both."

"The world grows wonderfully enlightened," exclaimed the doctor.

"The sphere of intellectual knowledge expands rapidly! 'Tis such men as Mr. Gnat that are born to settle the equilibrium of the human brain, and to give new nerve to the centre of cogitation! He is, as it were, an inventor of a luminous creation!—a pendulum to the great time-piece of Nature!"

"Have a care, or you will spoil all," whispered Doleful.

"The world is sufficiently enlightened already," cried the duke. "Plebeians have no business to think. Too much knowledge will annihilate subordination, and, in time, level all distinctions."

Mr.

Mr. Gnat smiled : the doctor rubbed his forehead ; and a pause of some minutes succeeded.

“ Though I am an enemy to every step that can produce a total overthrow of proper subordination,” said Mr. Optic, “ I am delighted when I contemplate the triumph of talents !—Genius will always find its proper sphere ; and though unquiet and discontented spirits will scarcely believe it, every wise and every honest mind will condemn profligacy and idolize talents, even though the former stands on the highest eminence of rank, and the latter moves meekly in the humblest paths of fortune.”

The duke hummed an opera air, and Mrs. Woodford half smiled, while her bosom confessed a divided adoration between mental and personal superiority.

“ Well, Mr. Gnat,” cried Miss Woodford, “ how did you like Mr. Terence’s

Terence's last play? Did you not think it charming?"

"It was very well acted," replied the critic.

"Did you not discover many good situations?"

"Many—in every part of the theatre," answered Mr. Gnat.

"I observed several ladies extremely affected," said Miss Woodford.

"The principal actress in particular," cried Mr. Gnat; "but she generally is affected."

"You are more severe than usual," said Mr. Optic.

The duke smiled.

"We all know that Mr. Optic is the exclusive idolater of Mrs. Siddons," said Gnat.

"I confess the charge," interrupted Mr. Optic; "and proudly avow myself the admirer, not only of her unrivalled talents, but of the inestimable virtues of her heart!"

The

The just panegyric was acknowledged by the whole circle, one person only excepted.

" She is a fine woman," said Gnat.

~~to~~ " Let us discuss the subject of Mr. Terence's play," cried Miss Woodford, addressing Mr. Gnat. " Did you not, in spite of critical severity, feel the effects of the principal scenes?"

" Considerably," replied Mr. Gnat; " they set me to sleep."

" Well, I must own," cried Miss Amoret, " that Mr. Terence's works delight me exceedingly: the women touch my heart with the strongest sensations of sympathy."

" I dare say," observed the critic Gnat; " for they are generally forward young ladies."

Miss Amoret, little pleased with this sarcastic remark, which was something more than an oblique reflection on her mind and manners, turning to her friend Mrs. O'Liffy, exclaimed, " Merciful

Heaven! what a rude, disagreeable man!—I am sure I have heard the duke say a thousand times that Mr. Terence's heroines were all angels!"

"True," cried Mr. Gnat; "for they are, in general, ideal beings."

"Don't you believe that there are such things as angels?" inquired Miss Woodford.

"I cannot doubt it in the present company," replied the critic.

"I declare," said Mrs. O'Liffy, "that same Mr. Terence is an enchanting crater; for he makes nothing in writing half a dozen comedies every winter."

"Unquestionably," observed Mr. Gnat; "and he is not the only modern author who makes nothing of a comedy."

"I seldom go to the play but when his pieces are acted," said Mrs. O'Liffy; "and I could sit to hear them fifty times over all in one, and never fail in every line to discover something new."

"It would be fortunate for the author if he could, for once, borrow a little of your discernment," said Mr. Gnat, with his usual good-nature.

"Did you not laugh at some of the scenes?" cried Miss Amoret.

"Very heartily—particularly at the pathetic ones," said Gnat.

"He has another ready for rehearsal!" sighed Mr. Doleful.

"A great many, I dare say," rejoined Mr. Gnat, fidgetting on his chair, and growing tired of every thing.

"I expect that the next will be as good as any of his others," cried the duke.

"No doubt!" was the laconic answer.

"You are scandalously fastidious and much too spleenetic to judge of any author's works," cried Mrs. Woodford.

"Mr. Terence is a man of infinite genius—an able reformer of vitiated taste—a just delineator of modern life—

a painter

a painter of Nature; and, as a judicious, but unprejudiced scholar observes, ‘ a mender of hearts !’

“ The beautiful Amelia would find him plenty of employment,” cried Doctor Pimpernel; “ for if he mends hearts as often as she breaks them, his experience must be unbounded.”

“ He might find some opportunities to exercise his art among modern philosophers,” cried Amelia, with an arch smile, which blunted the severity of sarcasm.

“ There I cannot agree with you,” said Mr. Optic; “ our modern philosophers’ hearts are, in general, past mending: they take so much pains to reform others, that they never think of self-reproof till their diseased imagination sets even their own remedy at defiance.”

“ Blockheads! — all blockheads!” whispered the doctor, addressing Mr.

Doleful. “Mere pretenders—political quacks: all froth and foam—nothing like stamina. They will not do when ‘Gods meet gods, and jostle in the dark!—Shew me a line in Terence’s play like that!’”

“It would be difficult!” said Mr. Optic, who overheard the doctor’s double-dealing.

“And yet Mr. Terence has a very considerable share of classical knowledge,” cried his grace, “considering he was educated in England.”

“That is of little importance,” replied Mr. Gnat. “One page of the new philosophy is worth all the libraries of all the universities.”

“And pray, Sir,” cried the duke, looking earnestly at the metaphysical critic, “what is the new philosophy?”

“It requires a great deal of argument and discussion to explain the system,” said Mr. Gnat, hesitating between every

every word he uttered. “ The new philosophy is——” Here he paused. “ In short, it is not the old philosophy.”

“ Well!—and I guessed as much!” exclaimed Mrs. O’Liffy.

“ By Heaven! you are the most enlightened woman upon earth!” said the doctor. “ The *rara avis* of female wits! the honour of your sex, and the glory of Hibernia!” Then, turning to Mr. Doleful, he added in a low voice, “ Vulgar baggage!” But I hear she is rich, and a great favourite with people of rank—particularly with the divine creatures!”

Mr. Optic renewed the subject of debate. “ Certainly,” said he, “ we have some living authors, who, with all the disadvantages of a contracted education, produce works of infinite merit. I am a friend to the effusions of genius, whether they proceed from a milk-woman’s dairy, or the stall of a cobler!

What was Shakespeare? The wild uncultivated child of Nature! unfettered by the shackles of scholastic labour; and, with the wings of inspiration, soaring above every contemporary."

"I trust you mean in the plebeian circles," said his grace; "for, if I recollect rightly, he was not noble."

"He was of Heaven's nobility!" sighed Mr. Doleful. Mr. Gnat smiled. "You poets are always soaring to the regions of fancy," said he; "but I still maintain, that a writer without a certain portion of metaphysical knowledge can never soar beyond mediocrity. A really wild uncultivated genius is not in the nature of things."

"But it is a thing of nature, which mocks the drudgery of schools, and makes puny innovators ficken with envy!" said Mrs. Woodford. "Do you think that genius cannot warm the bosom of a plough-boy, or tread the paths of

of fame in a pair of black stockings? Shame! shame on such despicable prejudices!"

"These are the vagabonds who presume to keep us in awe!" muttered his grace, with a shrug of discontent.

"'Tis a pity that Mrs. Woodford does not write criticisms," said Mr. Gnat, with a tone of voice so ironical, that it could not be mistaken. Mr. Doleful observed the blush which the sarcasm occasioned, and changed the subject.

"What think you of Charlotte Smith's sonnets?" cried he, addressing Amelia.

"I think them beautifully plaintive, and correctly harmonious," said Miss Woodford. "Indeed I admire all her works more or less, and some of them to enthusiasm; yet the pleasure experienced by her readers must be greatly diminished, by the reflection that so

cultivated a mind should feel the pressure of real sorrows, amidst the rich and beautiful effusions of imagination! Do you not commend *this authoress?*" continued Miss Woodford, addressing Mr. Gnat.

"I never read trifles of that sort," replied the hypercritic: "we always review poetry from report, none of our society being writers of verse. Indeed we seldom read more than ten pages of any book that is not written by one of our literary association;—and then, the heads of the critique generally come from the author."

"I am glad to find that he never reads what he reviews: I have some chance of a good word in that case," said the doctor, in a low tone, addressing Doleful.

"You have written a book then!" said Mr. Optic:—"I never heard of it."

"Nor

"Nor I," said Mrs. Woodford,

"Nor I," added Mr. Gnat.

"Nor I," said Amelia.

"A book!" cried his grace: "dame, doctor, what is it about? Love or physic? Stick to *la belle passion*, my knight of the pestle; it is more suited to your genius, and will gain you patrons, an hundred to one more than the latter. We all like beauty, but who the devil likes physic?"

"Knight of the pestle! By the immortal gods, this is unlucky!" exclaimed the doctor: then turning to Doleful, he continued: "These titled vagabonds think they dare say any thing; but I know how to be revenged. He shall have my love; and by G—d he shall take my physic!"

"That is a matter of course," said Mr. Optic.

Miss Amoret giggled; Mrs. O'Liffy looked solemn; Amelia blushed; when

Doleful, perceiving the doctor's chagrin, and wishing to quiet the irritation which the duke's absurd remark had occasioned, started a new subject for conversation. "How did you like Mrs. Lyric's last production?" said he, addressing Mr. Gnat.

"Why, I think she writes too rapidly," replied the critic; "and in her last circle of velocity she carried away a blue taper, a rusty lock, a ghost, the wing of a castle, a forest, a moat, a shriek, a chest, and a shadow, from our invaluable collection; while by giving an air of probability to the most striking incidents, she greatly injured the future effect of our laborious mystery."

"Do you think that an author cannot write rapidly, and at the same time well?" cried Mr. Doleful. "I never allow myself more than five minutes and two seconds, for a poem of four pages.

I wrote

I wrote my pantomimical opera in three hours."

" Just the period of its existence!" said Mr. Optic. " So short a life scarcely deserved damnation!"

Mr. Gnat forgot his natural gravity, and laughed aloud.

" But Mrs. Lyric is so proud, that she despairs our assistance," said Mr. Gnat. " She scorns to become one of our disciples, and to mingle in the refined system of universal knowledge. We never commend any books which we do not help to write. Mr. Cynic reviewed Mrs. Lyric's last work; he passes sentence on all female offenders."

" I do not wonder at the number of executions then," said Mr. Optic; " though I reprobate the malevolence which condemns the opening blossoms of genius. The press teems with dulness; and the universal rage for novel reading is unexampled: yet amidst the

mass of deformity, I have seen many fair proofs of very distinguished talents: and there certainly are women, whose books present types of good sense, and whose title to applause will flourish amidst the leaves of Parnassus!"

"Indeed!" cried Mrs. O'Liffy, "and I am proud to be one of the number; for I mean to trate the critics with an essay on Platonism; with some little nate remarks, to prove that the brogue is more softer than all the Italian on the other side the Shannon."

"For what purpose would you undertake so difficult a task?" inquired Mr. Gnat.

"For the instruction of boarding-school misses," replied Mrs. O'Liffy. "Miss Amoret will assist me in the labourious undertaking, and she will also write notes, amatory and explanatory, with couplets in the manner of Ovid; and some

some hints to modern lovers on the mysteries of ancient attachments."

"To what end?" cried Mr. Gnat, sneeringly.

"The end of time," replied Mrs. O'Liffy; "for my lesson will be read when the English language is forgotten: and a pretty bit of stuff it will be, I promise you!"

"Most probably," said Mr. Gnat, looking at Doleful with something like meaning.

"And Irish stuff is all the fashion," added Mr. Optic.

"I shall be delighted to disseminate your excellent lessons among the rising generation," said the doctor. "There can be no doubt, from the specimen which you carry about you, but the brogue is more harmonious than any other accent, ancient or modern. Cannot you contrive to introduce my book on Barley-water? It would be of great utility,

utility, and is much wanted for the use of schools."

"Och!" interrupted Mrs. O'Liffy, "mine will be a work of very great weight, upon my conscience."

"Pardon me," said Mr. Gnat, "the weight will be on the conscience of your reviewer." The kind circle laughed, and Mrs. O'Liffy, for once in her life, was completely disconcerted.

The duke, not being accustomed to literary conversation, after inviting me to his house with great cordiality, moved off.

Doctor Pimpernel, looking at his watch, exclaimed, "Well—must go—I want to call at the club to bespeak hands for the new play, 'Topsy Turvy, or every Slave his own Master,' written by a particular friend: heard it read; d—d nonsense; very like Shakespeare for all that. Well—you will all come—must support it, because the witty vagabond has

has so many noble connections among the dowagers ; d—n dowagers—generally old women. *A-propos*, one, now lying at the point of death—must look in upon the rich old jade, before she hops off. Come to the play—the right sort—beneficial to the whole race of man ! Men should assert their rights—women grow saucy—must be taken down—only invented to amuse the lords of the creation—no busines to write. Arrogant husseys ! Well !”

“ What think you of the poissardes of Paris,” said Mr. Doleful.

“ O ! grand creatures !” replied the doctor ; “ fine jades ! wonderful baggages ! *A-propos*—mind to call on a little French girl, just imported by Mother Lenoir the milliner—mustn’t forget it—was desired by the duke :—poor—and stingy—Well ! Patience !—cannot last long—thin as a farthing rush-light

light—quite burnt out. The game almost up ; for, the world is now whirling on the pivot of reason, and scattering the clouds of superstition to the surrounding chaos of undefinable space. Mind, Doleful, that you immortalize that idea in your next poem. The world—the world—what is the world?"

"A great accident!" sighed Mr. Doleful.

"Let us discuss the point philosophically," said Mr. Gnat.

"Or physically," cried the doctor.

"Or poetically," interrupted Mr. Doleful ; for what is it but a grand fiction, an air-born bubble—a balloon—a vast whirligig—a tennis-ball, for the spacious hand of nature?"

"Good! good ! sublime ! wonderful ! great ! grand!" exclaimed the doctor ; "the very electric gas of human understanding ; beats Rousseau—Bolingbroke ;

broke ;—beats all imagination : for man was born to dive—to jump—to soar—to fly ! to grapple with the stars ! to pull the planets from their spheres ! Well ; you'll come to the play ;—don't forget it, beautiful Amelia!"

Here the doctor's exit put a period to the critical, philosophical, physical, poetical discussion ; and I returned to my chamber, with my head throbbing, and my pulses beating more violently than ever ; and my mind completely disgusted with the system of *modern criticism*.

CHAP. XLIII.

FATIGUED by the perpetual buzz of the evening, I sunk to sleep till near sunrise, when awaking, I quitted my bed, and having hastily dressed myself, descended to the street. The early time of morning afforded me hopes of taking the benefit of the air and exercise without much danger of being seen. The hour was inviting; the Green-Park was sprinkled with a slight shower which had fallen at dawn-light, and I resolved to refresh myself with a walk till breakfast.

I strolled towards the grove which nearly encircles the Ranger's Lodge, and rapt in melancholy musing scarcely knew whither I was going, when I observed a woman's hat lying on the margin of a piece of water which was not

far

far distant. I flew to the spot, and perceived a folded paper also, on which was written these words—

*‘ Je mourrai ! ce n'est point désespoir ; c'est certitude que j'ai épuisé mes maux ; que leur terme est arrivé ! Il faut donc que je parte *.’*

Again I examined the hat, and with painful perturbation recollect ed that it was the same which had adorned the head of the unhappy Julie. Convinced in my own mind that she had put a period to her miseries, I stood for several minutes overwhelmed with amazement; I felt the blood curdle at my heart, and had not strength to move, nor power to call assistance. The day increased in brightness; the din of business awakened me from the stupor of affliction! every

* Werther, Seconde Partie.

thing around me was gay, animated, enchanting ! Again I turned to contemplate the still water, and shuddered with new horrors, when I thought on the unfortunate being who could find no other resting-place. The lowing cattle were grazing near my path, the birds were singing on the branches of the over-hanging trees ; yet the terrors of hell seemed to encompass me, and I even envied the rash Julie her cold and silent pillow. Again I looked wildly round, and, observing two centinels approaching, snatched up the hat, with the written farewell to earthly persecution, and was hastening towards the gate, when they seized me, conducted me to the guard-house, and from thence to a justice of the peace, where, to my infinite astonishment, I was accused of murder.

The witness against me was a servant girl, who swore that she saw me, from a window in Piccadilly, struggling for some

some time with a female, who made violent resistance; that, terrified by the singularity of the scene, she had alarmed the family, and during her absence from the window, the female had disappeared, leaving me alone on the margin of the water; she then apprised the centinels, and I was seized accordingly.

This tale bore such strong marks of plausibility, and I had so little to say in my defence, that I was considered as guilty, before I had time to examine the event. My pockets were searched, and the card with Mademoiselle de Beaumont's assumed address corroborated the accusation beyond a shadow of doubt. I had only one step to take—to be patient till time should elucidate the mystery and confirm my innocence.

The hat was brought into court, and I was questioned to whom it belonged—I replied—"To Mademoiselle de Beaumont." The centinel had lost the written

ten paper; the unhappy Julie had quitted her lodgings, and I began to think my situation perilous in the extreme. Before I had time to devise means for my defence, a new perplexity sprung up to oppose my emancipation—the constable, from whose clutches I had escaped in the watch-house, recognized my person, and I was immediately committed, on an escape-warrant, to a prison in Clerkenwell.

Oh! Rosanna! how did my heart bound with joy! how did my veins throb with satisfaction, when I was informed that the person whom I had rescued from the iron fingers of the law, was my generous, but unfortunate patron, Mr. Randolph.

I did not deny the rescue, but pleaded not guilty of the murder. The spirit of innocence sustained my resolution, and the dread of punishment caused no emotion in my bosom. Though I

scorned

scorned the misery of toiling beneath a patron's despotism; though I would neither hire myself out to countenance vice, nor accept a despicable bribe to wink at enormity, I was not willing to appear wholly unknown. Without soliciting the smallest favour, I wrote a few lines to the Duke of Heartwing: his marked civilities towards me at Mrs. Woodford's, authorized the hope that, in so distressing a dilemma, he would not refuse to acknowledge me. I represented my case, as that of a man who was wrongfully accused of a crime at which humanity shuddered. My messenger, after waiting three hours in the duke's antichamber, brought me back the verbal and laconic answer, that his grace knew no such person.

Having little to hope from exalted benevolence, I was not so much chagrined as may be imagined by this abrupt and indelicate denial. I knew the duke

to

to be selfish and ostentatious, and therefore I rather anticipated a refusal than soothed my mind with the idea of protection. I had heard many anecdotes, in which avarice had struggled with pride, and caprice overpowered the pleadings of humanity; but conviction at once decided my opinion, and on my mind marked the generosity of his grace in indelible characters.

I then penned an application to Mr. Gnat: but he, ever on the wing, was nowhere to be found. I dispatched another letter to Mr. Doleful — his excessive sensibility and enthusiastic love of freedom could not bear to witness my captivity. Doctor Pimpernel was fearful that his being known to visit a person in my predicament, would injure him in his profession: his philanthropy could not support the idea of beholding oppressed innocence: and, though “the broad beams of human reason were expanding

panding from Indus to the pole," I was condemned to linger in a loathsome prison without a single ray to comfort my afflictions. You will wonder at my making no trial of Mr. Optic's humanity; but I had not resolution to obtrude my complaints on that fountain of benevolence which was already divided into a thousand parts, and each devoted to the throbings of sympathy. It was to those who seldom experienced the touch of sensibility that I applied for protection; I could not press an additional pang on a bosom which felt too forcibly the miseries of the human race to experience many moments of tranquillity.

Stung to the heart by the cold denial of unfeeling minds, I almost began to despair; yet the Muse had never failed to visit me under the pressure of calamity; and though her solace was blended with melancholy, as the last and only

resource, I thus claimed her consolation :—

Ah! cold NEGLECT! more chilling far
Than Zembla's blast or Scythia's snow!

Sure, born beneath a luckless star

Is he, who, after ev'ry pain

Has wrung his bosom's central vein,

To fill his bitter cup of woe,

Is destin'd thee to know!

The smiles of fame, the pride of truth,

All that can lift the glowing mind,

The noblest energies of youth,

Wit, valour, genius, science, taste!

A form by all that's lovely grac'd,

A soul where virtue dwells enshrin'd,

A prey to thee we find!

The spring of life looks fresh and gay,

The flow'rs of fancy bud around!

We think that ev'ry morn is May;

While hope and rapture fill the breast,

We hold reflection's lone a jest,

Nor own that sorrow's shaft can wound,

Till cold NEGLECT is found.

Ah!

Ah! then, how sad the world appears,
How false, how idle are the gay!
Morn only breaks to witness tears,
And ev'ning closes, but to shew
That darkness mimics human woe,
And life's best scene a summer day,
That shines and fades away!

Some dread disease, and others woe,
Some visionary torments see;
Some shrink unpitied love to know,
Some writhe beneath oppression's fangs,
And some with jealous hopeless pangs:
But whatsoe'er my fate may be,
Oh, keep NEGLECT from me!

E'en, after death, let mem'ry's hand,
Directed by the moon-light ray,
Weave o'er my grave a cypress band,
And bind the sod with curious care,
And scatter flow'rets fresh and fair,
And oft the sacred tribute pay,
To keep NEGLECT away!

CHAP. XLIV.

ON the evening of the same day, I was informed that a lady wished to speak with me; and, on my consenting to see her, Mrs. Woodford entered my apartment. Her astonishment was only to be equalled by her kindness; she offered to bail me, and to find a friend who would join in the surety—she named Mr. Optic as certain to step forward in the cause of humanity; and with disgust informed me that the persons to whom I had written for consolation, though they refused to grant my request, had blazoned my disgrace over one half the metropolis.

Mrs. Woodford's visit cheered my sinking spirits; for sympathy comes sweetly to the soul in the hour of persecution;

cution; and in proportion as I despised the neglect of base and little minds, I learned how to appreciate the value of her kindness. I wanted no pecuniary aid; but, of this important circumstance the kind philanthropists were wholly ignorant.—Mrs. Woodford offered to lend me any sum that might procure the advantages of a legal defence, and, by repeated assurances of attention, overwhelmed my heart with gratitude that was unbounded.

I passed a weary and melancholy night; I retraced the paths of life which I had trodden, and my tortured memory presented on every side the thorns of persecution. Yet my proud heart would have perished rather than have unburdened its griefs to Lady Aubrey, or have sued for pity from the capricious Isabella.

How different, Rosanna! was my narrow gloomy cell from the wild woods

and breezy mountains of Glenowen!—
Of Glenowen?—I must think of my
native haunts no more! I must chase
from my wandering imagination every
vision of past happiness!

Again every inquiry was made after
Julie de Beaumont, but no tidings of
her could be obtained in any quarter.
Two days passed in dreadful uncertainty,
when on the third evening I was con-
soled by a visit from Amelia. She en-
tered the room trembling and agitated;
she could but feebly articulate—“ For-
give—excuse this strange, this intruding
visit; my motive is to offer you the
purest wishes of friendship and esteem—
accept them—I conjure you to accept
them.”

I knelt, and taking her hand with the
tenderest respect, thanked her for her
generous conduct—“ How?” said I,
“ oh, tell me how I shall prove my gra-
titude?—how shall I repay such sweet
benevo-

benevolence?" She blushed, and with a look of mild reprobation withdrew her hand; I dreaded to offend her, and intreated her to make every allowance for a being almost bewildered by sorrow. A silence of several minutes succeeded; at length, with some hesitation, and an agitated voice, she again addressed me—“The motive of my visit you will know hereafter; but for the present, I conjure you not to question me. Suffice it that your situation excites a pang which penetrates my heart; I know you—and—”

“ You know me, Miss Woodford?” interrupted I, with amazement—“ Impossible!” “Your name is Ainsforth,” said she; “ Walsingham Ainsforth.—Take comfort to your bosom, and all will yet be well.” I stood like a statue, petrified by consternation. The turnkey of the prison

at this moment informed me that all strangers must depart for the night, and Miss Woodford reluctantly took her leave, with a promise to renew her visit on the first opportunity.

Amelia renewed her visit on the following morning, and by the gentlest manners extracted half the poison from the sting of persecution. She passed the whole day with me, and by her conversation rendered existence at least supportable. I conjured her to leave me.—I represented in the strongest language the slander and disgrace which malignity would heap upon her, for her too tender solicitude. She blushed, wept, and attempted to justify her zeal by the eloquent language of benevolence; but confusion interrupted her powers of articulation, and betrayed sensations which my self-love trembled to interpret.

Amelia's marked attentions soothed while they alarmed me. I knew that perfection

perfection falls not to the lot of man, and I felt that of all men living I had the least right to boast it.

Oh, Rosanna! would Reason but make an effort to counteract human vanity, how many, by flying from the syren Pleasure, would defeat the machinations of that restless demon, who triumphs in destroying.

Miss Woodford was amiable, lovely, and accomplished.—I could have loved her sincerely, tenderly; but the image of Isabella was placed by destiny as a sentinel before my heart, forbidding every other object to find access even for a moment. Such is the perverse nature of our sex, that the voice of affection only serves to ficken or to chill our bosoms, while the tyrant who flies, and leaves the arrow of disdain implanted in our hearts, holds an undivided sway, and, by every instance of contempt, adds a new link to the chain which entrals us.

Miss Woodford had brought with her several books, in hopes that I might find some amusement during those dreary hours when the horrors of captivity find an alleviation from an intercourse with society. The Minstrel of the inspired Beattie—the interesting and improving lessons of Pratt—the classical works of Murphy—the sweetly soothing effusions of Charlotte Smith—and that fund of humour and character, the Evelina of Miss Burney, formed the collection of her choice. “I bring you,” said she, “the works of living authors; for I am old-fashioned enough to allow praise before the marble of a sepulchre blunts the shafts of envy and detraction.

For oft where high the tree of genius springs,
The pale fiend hovers with her mildew wings,
Shades the rich foliage from the frost'ring ray,
And marks each leaf for premature decay;

Dims

Dims the warm glow that decorates the fruit;
 And strikes her lightning glances to the root;
 Strips the rent fragments of each latent bloom,
 Nor leaves one branch to deck the Poet's tomb."

We were again interrupted by the hour of shutting the prison. Miss Woodford departed, and I had just opened one of the books which she had brought me, when the turnkey entered my apartment, vociferating — “ How fares it with you, young master? Come, come, leave your books, and endeavour to raise your spirits; von hour’s mirth is worth a month of reading. Don’t be saint-hearted, my master—times will mend; ye grow wiser every day; and I have noose to tell you.”

“ Good news, I hope,” said I, laying down my book, and listening earnestly.

“ Vy, you’re found out, that’s all,” replied the turnkey; “ you’re blown; there’s no queering the law—ye gentlemen in office arn’t to be done over.”

" Speak intelligibly, for Heaven's sake," said I ; " for I do not comprehend you."

" Vy, talking is dry wory, young master," replied the turnkey ; " and unprofitable wорds are apt to stick in von's throat, as von may say. Ve gentlemen of the law measures our breath by the length of our customer's pocket—good words arn't to be had for nothing."

I understood the hint, and desired him to fetch a bottle of his best port.

" Vy, as to vine," says he, holding his hat suspended over one eye, " ours is but a sort of vish-vash old stuff made of the newest materials, and imported duty free from the neighbourhood of the metropolis. I'm up to their rigg, my young master; I doesn't chuse to drink sloe poison; it does vell enough for some of our visitors, whose full pockets and empty heads are calculated to patterize new inwensions. If 'twasn't

for

for such like, vy your mountebags
you'dnt ride about in their coaches, and
fill the churchyards with customers, and
all the vile stare honest men out of coun-
tenance."

" True," said I; " but you are an
observer, I find."

" 'Tis part of my trade, master, to
keep a good look out, and every man
makes obserwations now-a-days," said
the turnkey. " Then, I examines the
noosepapers, and I vatches the world as
it goes: ah, master! the more von sees,
the less von likes: vy ve have a bit of
a club here in the wicinity of the prifon,
and if you'd make your hair stand an
end, vas you but to hear how ve talks
politics! Ve gives them a vord of a
fort, now and then, I promise you; and
ve have some knowing horroters among
us that fettles things in a gifey."

" I dare say," answered I.

" But

"But we arn't all wagabonds, master; we have the big and the little; gentlemen of every description, from Dookes and Lords, down to shoeblocks and tinkers; though the lowest don't alvays do the dirtiest wark, master; and we don't much like to place no great dependance on your high flyers; for they be merry much given to lying; and we sometimes thinks that they plays a rum game, and wants to be a peg too high for us: but we are up to their gossip, and vatches them like links; we makes light of 'em, as von may say;—Lords are but men, master."

"So I think, my honest friend," said Lovewell, "and now es'ay this."

"And yet," continued the turnkey, "ye have some vise heads among us, I promise you; for vit does nt always belong to great folks, nor yisdom to rich vons: we begins to know a thing or two,

two, and to value our rights and our priweleges, as vell as our betters. But this is dry woryk, master."

" And if you don't take care, may stand a chance to choke you," said I.
" What will you take to wash it down?"

" Vy, a drop of the right sort, if you have no objections, master; vat say you to a pint of brandy?"

" With all my heart," answered I,
" if you will help me to drink it:
and as my spirits are counterfeit, I trust
that yours will be genuine.

" As pure as gold, and as clear as my eye," replied the turnkey, darting out of the room, and leaving me to reflect on his political knowledge and purity of dialect. In a few minutes he returned, with a flaming decanter, a large bowl, some sugar, and a small mug of water; and taking the only chair in the apartment,

apartment, he began to mingle the ingredients with more delight than moderation. "Rare stuff, master!" cried the turnkey, swallowing a large glass of brandy, which in colour and taste resembled liquid fire.

"Where do you get your spirits?" said I.

"I smuggles," replied the turnkey. "All good things are got by fly vays as times go. Nothing thrives that's fair and above-board; 'tis as mild as mother's milk, and as clear as amber:—beats all the vine in the uniwerse:—and that's the vay with all things now-a-days; the strong beats the weak;—vat says you, master?" A second glass of pure liquor washed down the remark.

"I say nothing," answered I, smiling.

"Vy that's the vay to be on the right side: the leſt that's said the better, as things goes, master. I do not vant for any thing,

thing, thank God; and vy should I be vailing and veeping like a sniweller. I have got a trifle of a genteel competency, and keeps the mill going, that helps on, from hand to mouth, as von may say."

" You are in trade then?" said I.

" No, I aint up to trade:—I han't resolution to be twice 'Whereas,' and then to shew my nose above my betters."

" How then do you profit by your industry?"

" I dabbles."

" I do not comprehend you," said I.

" I nabs the bulls, and am down upon the bears, and figures avay in the stocks. I knows a thing or two:—besides, I gets tipped now and then, for watching the patriots."

" But do you reconcile that to your conscience?" said I.

" Vy

"*Vy look'e, master, I only imitates my betters: they vatches, and they takes bribes,*" replied the turnkey: "*and as for conscience, vy it is only saleable at the general election;—there von gets a good price to be sure; but that don't come often.*" A third glass gave a pause to our discourse. "*I loves to do things like a gentleman,*" cried my companion, gasping for breath. "*I knows the importance of my station: I am an officer in his Majesty's service, God bless him! and never forgets vat belongs to my carreter.*"

"*An officer in his Majesty's service!*" repeated I, with some astonishment. "*Yes, I serves the public, and vatches the people, at the same time; and as his Majesty is the law-maker, vy of course I am in his service, ven I performs my duty.*"

" The

"The people make the laws, my honest friend," said I. "The legislative body, their representatives, form the glorious pillars that support the throne."

"Lord love your silly noddle!" cried the turnkey. "Tis at court, as 'tis in love;—kissing goes by favour. Vy vat should I be, if I cou'dn't palawer a bit, ven I finds a flat that is to be done over? Look at the great house in Westminster: don't they settle every thing by the gift of the gab!"

"You speak freely," said I.

"Because I'm a free subject, and loves my king; and you'dn't wrong him of a straw to be made Lord Chief Justice." Then, taking another glass, he continued, "Pure stuff, master; I gets it over by means of a friend, who has as snug a boat as ever crossed the Goodwins: and only, that I mayn't do as I likes, and should fight shy of the penalty, I you'd set up a varehouse myself, and supply my

my friends with sperits of my own importance."

" You have an excellent stock," said I, " which nature has given you, and which, with proper correction, will not be amenable to the laws."

The turnkey's vanity grew strong as his articulation became weak, and he was just falling asleep, when the clock struck one.

" There goes the little-von," said he, starting up, and taking another draught, " and I must go to our club: we expects a great debate to-night, and I shall be wanted to give my wote. I alvays goes for two reasons, to vatch and to promote enflamation."

" Information you mean," said I.

The tippling politician, overwhelmed with stupor, sunk into a profound sleep. The key of the room was on the inside: his snoring prevented the possibility of any slight noise being heard:—the moment

ment was propitious, and I passed the threshold uninterrupted.

After locking my lynx in his own den, I proceeded down a long dark passage with trembling agitation. Every breeze that whispered alarmed me, and I scarcely knew what I was doing. In my hurry to escape, I had forgot to take a light, and was proceeding, without the least knowledge of the avenues of the prison, in total darkness, when I perceived a moon-beam entering at an iron grate, which served to pour a narrow stream of light and air into the ground floor of the building. The bar, which divided this little aperture, was corroded with rust, and the wood-work, which composed the frame, being softened by the humidity of the situation, on applying all my strength, the whole gave way. My joy was excessive, for I was too far distant from my snoring turnkey, to admit the possibility of his hearing me.

oh bōDāq I hōa ,asotiqeq q aw sasit
yūwāt
nōb awo aik tī xīwū vāw nōbōl wāt A
egishq shab gnoi s nōb bōbōnq I

CHAP. XLV.

I FOUND myself in a small court, encompassed by lofty walls, and guarded by a railing of iron planted in every direction. The clearness of the night afforded me an opportunity of contemplating the situation, and I found it no less terrible than that from which I had escaped. After standing like a statue that was petrified, during several minutes, the moon-beams, by removing the shadow from one side of the court, discovered a small casement-window: my heart bounded with hope, and I listened to hear if the apartment to which it belonged was inhabited.

All was silent as death, both within the house and the prison. At least I knew that the turnkey was yet sleeping, and my resolution was not wholly exhausted.

hausted. Time flew rapidly till the break of day; when, still fixing my eyes on the casement-window, I perceived a human form, with the face towards me. The light was not sufficiently clear for me to discover the features, but by the dress I could faintly distinguish that it was a female.

"If an atom of pity warms your heart," said I earnestly, "assist me in escaping from these infernal regions. I am innocent of any crime, and will reward you liberally."

No answer was returned: my heart beat with a mixture of anxiety and hope; the woman retired from the window, and I was again reduced to despair.

Not daring to call aloud, lest I should alarm the prison, I waited with agonizing impatience, still fixing my eyes on the little casement; when in a moment, to my infinite joy, I saw a sheet descend, to the corner of which was fastened a

second,

second; and that attached firmly to a strong iron bar which divided the window. The wall was built with rugged stone; and, my situation being desperate, I did not stay to examine the difficulty of ascending. Resolution gave new strength to every sinew; and, the consciousness that the only alternative was misery, enabled me to surmount all impediments. In a few minutes I reached the window, and pulled the linen-ladder after me, when a new obstacle presented itself; the iron bar was immovable; and the space on each side so narrow, that it was wholly impossible for me to enter the chamber. Again the female approached the casement. "Oh God! my heart shivers while I recollect the sensation of that moment! It was Julie de Beaumont." "You snatched me from confinement, generous Walsingham!" said she, taking my hand and kissing it, "and Heaven

Heaven has permitted me in return to be your preserver."

I could make no answer; the astonishment, the joy, the terror that seized upon my heart, almost overpowered me; and I seated myself on the low parapet, scarcely conscious where I was, or what I did. She conjured me to find a more secure place, lest I should be seen from the prison. Again I arose; but my head was so giddy that I was near falling from the house-top, when Julie, stretching forth her arm, pulled me back; and saved me.

"Conceal yourself," said she, "behind the slanting roof of this apartment till the different lodgers quit their chambers. On the other side the house, there are several garret windows which are not so strongly barricaded; at one of them most likely you may enter. Here it is impossible to give you hope; for this bar is so connected with the beam which

crosses the roof, that there is no chance of removing it without shattering the whole fabric."

I now inquired what lodgers occupied the different chambers. She had been but one night in the house, and briefly informed me that the only persons she had seen were a sick gentleman with three children, and a methodist with his wife, who were the proprietors of the habitation. I followed her advice, and crept round the point of the roof till I came near another window. The casement having no curtain, I plainly perceived every thing that passed in the apartment.

At a table, which was scattered over with loose papers, sat an elderly man, deeply engaged in writing something which seemed to interest his feelings. A little boy was kindling a small fire, and two younger children were sleeping on a bed near the window. Several

panes

panes of glass being shattered, I seated myself near the jutting sides of the penthouse which covered the garret casement, and resolved patiently to wait my destiny.

I soon discovered that the tenant of this lofty apartment was an author, and that the work, on which he then employed his melancholy hours, was a Tragedy. Several passages, which he read aloud, convinced me that his talents were of no inferior order; his appearance and situation affected me strongly, and, by comparing his fate with my own, I received a sort of painful consolation, which, while it relieved my heart, attached it to his interest.

I remained some time in my airy concealment, when I began to lose every hope of the author's quitting his chamber by the sound of his door, which was locked and bolted every time his little son went out or returned with such

necessaries as were wanted for the day's subsistence. I was on the point of discovering myself, when a knock at the room door arrested my steps. The little boy cautiously opened it, and a man entered, drest in a shabby suit of black, with short-lank hair, and a countenance demurely sanctified. During a brief altercation I discovered that the visitor was the landlord, who came to menace the ill-fated author with an immediate seizure of his effects, unless he was paid a demand as far beyond the finances of his tenant, as he was inferior to his debtor in mental qualifications.

A warm debate ensued. The poet pleaded inability to pay, and the landlord urged the justice of his demand. "I have a work now nearly finished," said the son of the Muses. "A bookseller has promised to give me five guineas for it when completed, and I will then pay you, at least a part of your demand."

" You owe me ten," cried the hard-hearted creditor; " and how shall I get the remainder in case you keep your word, which I much question? for poets are but liars, and propagators of profane opinions. They are not curbed in their wicked propensities by the fear of hell, or the menaces of Heaven! Why are all poets poor? why are all poets ragged? why are all poets miserable?—Because they are full of sin! the dealers of the devil's cards! the makers of diabolical books, of lies, and wickedness!"

" Yet give me another week," said the poor poet. " Consider my infants; if you drive them into the street they must perish!"

" The Lord will protect *them*," cried the sanctified persecutor. " But *I* must be paid! I will no longer harbour the builder-up of those steps that lead down to the dark dwellings of Lucifer. Burn

your wicked books!—your lying books!—your wanton books!—your prophane books of the devil's own inventing!—your Tragedies, and your Comedies, and your Parodies, and your Monodies; and all the abominable finery of Satan's library! But the Prince of Darkness will soon unfold the leaves of your abominations: he will sew you up in sheets of sulphur; he will hot-press you in his flaming workshop; he will bind you with hot iron. You will be read; but not read by the wicked!—not read by the idle!—not read by the wanton!—You will be red by the great oven of Belzebub!"

"I intreat you to be patient," said the dejected author. " Consider that mercy is the first of Christian virtues!—that to comfort the forlorn, to shelter the unhappy, to feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, is the glory of humanity."

" How

" How shall I be paid?" cried the pious dun. " Where shall I get my money?—I cannot stay preaching to you, wasting my words, and holding forth in the regions of abomination, while our poor flock is waiting in the fields under the broad blue canopy of Heaven for my approach. I cannot stay to hear your squalling brats crying for the adulterated bread of sin, while my children of grace, groaning in the true spirit of godliness, are longing for my presence!"

He was departing, when the poet caught his arm—" Only twelve hours!" said he, " I intreat, I conjure you to give me only twelve hours, and I will see what can be done."

At this moment the landlord's better-half, if quantity may be allowed to take place of quality, rushed into the chamber, with " Turn the vagabonds out: the bailiff is below; seize their goods;

don't stand parleying here while your congregation is waiting for you. I'll stay and see things done as they should be. These are not times for honest folks to feed a parcel of starving imps with the bread of holiness. Such vagrants as these only turn our labours in the field of salvation into ridicule, sow the weeds of controversy among the upright, and teach the lambs of our pasture to think for themselves instead of listening to us, who walk in the true path of religion."

" For pity's sake," said the poet, " do not urge me on to desperation! — Reflect, that religion's purest attribute is humanity; that the hand of true benevolence will never be raised towards the throne of Mercy, without receiving the reward it merits."

" None of your wicked and profane canting!" cried the landlord. " The canter shall canter down the broad road
of

of perdition!—he shall go full gallop!—he shall tumble off, and he shall be destroyed!"

The landlord departed, and his wife having given the signal, in a few moments the bailiff rushed in, while the unhappy family, the poor poet and his half-famished children, were consigned to despair. I could no longer resist the impulse of my heart, but, leaping in at the window, occasioned a new scene of consternation.

—! calling him by her old name—had

CHAP. XLVI.

THE landlady's shrieks brought Mademoiselle de Beaumont to the apartment, and the group presented a variety which would have afforded an excellent subject for the pencil of Hogarth.

My appearance placed me above the suspicion of being a robber, and it was instantly concluded that I was a concealed gallant of their new inmate. The sanctified dame, whose power in the great scene of events was infinite, turning all the strong artillery of abuse against the trembling Julie, diverted the tide of suspicion from me, and thereby ensured my safety. I informed the deputy of the law that if he would adjourn with me to the next coffee-house, I would settle the business. A guinea, neatly slipped into his hand,

pur-

purchased acquiescence, and, taking an hasty leave of the astonished poet, I quitted the apartment.

We entered a public-house in the neighbourhood; the landlord was sent for. I waited with anxious impatience for his arrival, and dreaded every moment the loss of my own liberty. At length he came; having abruptly quitted his rostrum, and left his gaping multitude under the pretext of sudden indisposition. Not conscious that I had heard his morning debate with Mr. M'Arthur—for such was the name of the reduced and neglected poet—he put on the placid mask of solemnity, and, stealing into an obscure parlour, bowed with the humility of a true disciple.

"It grieves me sorely!" said he sighing; "it grieves me mightily, that my lodger has been troubled by the hand of persecution!—The Lord knows that my heart is open to the unhappy;

that my hand is ever stretched forth to raise the afflicted ! But my wife is given to wrath !—She is one of the hasty !—she has a brawling tongue, and peace dwells not with her !—She wants money to pay for the bread of our industry, and she will take no denial. We consume not our money in feasting, nor in guzzling, nor in wine-bibbing ; not in gaudy apparel. We live soberly and holily ! We mortify the flesh, and we purify the spirit !”

“ How much does Mr. M‘Arthur owe you ? ” said I.

“ He owes me fifteen pounds,” replied the landlord ; modestly adding five since the demand in the morning.

I put my hand into my waistcoat to search for my pocket-book, when, to my infinite consternation, I found that it was gone. Whether I had lost it in the prison, in the apartment of wretchedness, going along the street, or in passing

ing the outward room of the public-house, which was thronged with guests, I knew not. Only three guineas remained, which were in my purse; and I was now involved in a situation more perplexing than ever.

With the most awkward embarrassment I unfolded my situation, and offered to give any security in my power for Mr. M'Arthur's release from his hard-hearted creditor. Nothing would do but the money, or a draft upon some person of known property and reputation. Time was precious; every hour presented danger, and I was bewildered almost to frenzy, when Mademoiselle de Beaumont, who had watched me from the window of Mr. M'Arthur's apartment, came running into the room with a countenance of joy. "The debt is discharged," exclaimed she. "The most liberal, the worthiest of men, has given the sum to Mr. M'Arthur, and

he

he is now embracing his little family overwhelmed with tears of rapture!"

"To whom did Heaven grant the supreme gratification of such a benevolent action?" said I; "and why, amidst all my sorrows, am I deprived of one blissful moment, which would have more than overpaid them?"

"Ah!" cried Julie, bursting into tears, "he is the ministering angel of benevolence! He snatched me from the confines of the grave! He beheld me, struggling with my adverse fate; meditating the last act of frenzied desperation; and, by forcing me from the fatal spot, preserved a life that shall be devoted to gratitude."

We all hastened back to Mr. M'Arthur's chamber, where we found the father, silently indulging the sensations of his full and throbbing heart; while his children were weeping tears of joy, and fondly hanging round their benefactor,

in whose features I instantly recognized
—the rattling—punning—laughing Op-
tic !

" He started from his seat, and shaking
my hand, interrupted the words I was
going to utter, in praise of his noble
philanthropy, with, " Ha ! Mr. Montagu ! how fares it with you in this world
of dulness and depravity ? Yet why
should I ask you this question ? You are
the associate of genius and virtue !" A
look of regard, directed towards Mr.
M'Arthur, marked the meaning of his
words, and was instantly repaid by a
modest bow of acknowledgment.
" Your kindness will overwhelm me,"
said the poet ; " your benevolent ac-
tions know no bounds !"
" True," replied Mr. Optic, " they
lead to my own gratification, which is
indeed boundless." Then, turning to-
wards me, he continued, " What brought
you to this apartment ? This is highly
honourable

honourable to your taste, and proves, beyond contradiction, that your propensities are lofty."

" That I soared is unquestionable," answered I ; " but I was aided by a pitying spirit." A glance which signified caution, checked my tongue, and reminded me of my perilous situation.

A new scene of vicissitude at this instant attracted our attention. The sanctified landlord, instead of receiving the money extorted from Mr. M'Arthur, was, by the same bailiff, arrested for treble the sum. The writ had been some days in his pocket, at the suit of the publican, to whose house we had adjourned, for liquors; to the use of which the puritanical landlord, and the meek wife of his bosom, were inordinately addicted. The concluding scene was therefore more than commonly striking, and like a sprightly epilogue to a deep and foul-tearing tragedy, sent the spectators

spectators away in tolerable spirits, with the reflection, that much moral good sometimes springs from the source of apparent evil.

After taking leave of Mr. M'Arthur and his friend Optic, I quitted the house, as much at a loss which road to take as though I had at that moment landed on a desert island. I strolled about the streets till evening, and then, after a struggle betwixt gratitude and despondency, resolved to throw myself once more on the candour and hospitality of Mrs. Woodford.

She received me with the most impressive kindness. I told her all that had happened, except the material circumstance of my complete bankruptcy. Still I assumed the name of Montagu, and waited impatiently for an interview with Miss Woodford, which might enable her to explain the mystery by which she had discovered my real situation.

tion. Mademoiselle de Beaumont having promised, by her appearance in the court of justice, to exonerate me from the charge of murder, the only circumstance remaining against me was the rescue of Mr. Randolph: but that event seemed irremediable; I was too poor to pay the debt, and too proud to expose my name to the censure which would follow detection, or to the penalty which the law would inflict for a violation of propriety. The predicament in which I was involved seemed to preclude every hope of adjustment; Mrs. Woodford, however, assured me, that her house should be my asylum; and I agreed to keep my retreat wholly private, by concealing myself in the apartments on the second floor, till I could obtain some tidings of Colonel Aubrey and the family of Glenowen.

On the evening of my return to Mrs. Woodford's, I wrote letters to Lady Aubrey,

Aubrey, to Mr. Hanbury, and to Bath, without mentioning what had passed since my arrival in London, or the place of my abode. I requested them to direct their answers to the Mount Coffee-house in Grosvenor-street, and to let me know whether or not Colonel Aubrey had sailed for Gibraltar. By the newspapers of the day, I found that "Lord Linbourne still languished beyond the faintest hope of recovery;" that "his antagonist," without mentioning his name, "had suddenly departed, as was supposed, for the continent." To this intelligence was added another paragraph to the following effect:

"A certain Lady, of fashionable note,
" who eloped from Bath with a
" young Welsh Baronet, found that her
" beauty could not counteract the de-
" pravity of her conduct; for the ju-
" venile enamored took his leave, after
" travelling only a few miles, leaving
" the

" the Lady " to think on what was past,
" and sigh alone."

This intelligence rather vexed than pleased me. The idea that Sir Sidney Aubrey had relinquished Isabella was too delightful to admit of my envying his success with Lady Emily Delvin.

I had scarcely time to conclude the paragraph, when an advertisement met my eye that overwhelmed me with chagrin. It contained a description of my person, with my real name ; related the rescue of Mr. Randolph, and offered five hundred pounds reward to any person who would apprehend and convey me to a justice of the peace. I now discovered the source from which Miss Woodford had obtained her intelligence, and my mortification was infinite ; for the idea of being detected in a falsehood was, to me, the most terrible of all humiliations.

I passed

I passed several days in my concealment, receiving no visitors, except Mrs. Woodford, her amiable daughter, and Mr. Optic; on whose honour and humanity we confidently relied, from a thorough conviction that, with all the apparent vivacity of his nature, his mind and heart were amply stored with the most inestimable qualities! He passed many evenings with me, and by his friendly counsel consoled my afflictions. He united with me in commiserating the frailty of human nature, and in the just opinion that a love of virtue, springing from sentiments of instinctive reason, as beneficial to mankind and society in general, was the true basis of religion; the foundation of every moral good, and the first distinction which man could evince in this scene of perpetual vicissitude.

legato via his old friends I
and acquaintances, on which it went
back to the old man and brought him
and his men along no longer. All
the rich, busy, thinking people in
both the cities were horrified by what
had all taken off to visit the new
order. In fact they were more like
bells than like people. From
that day on the old regime was
overruled by the new. The old
governmentalists of the old order
said nothing, or if they did, it
was to say that the new regime
was a better government. But
they did not say that the new
regime was better than the old.

